Prayer

ARNO C. GAEBELEIN

PRAYER

by Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein

The purpose of this little volume is to trace the fact of prayer from the beginning to the end of the Word of God. The author examines different passages in which prayer is mentioned, points out the different forms of prayer, the circumstances under which the prayers were uttered, the answered prayers, and the prayers which have prophetic significance, being connected with future events. The place of prayer in the lives of Old Testament characters is shown, the place of prayer and the promises of prayer as connected with the life of our Lord, and prayer in the Epistles. The author has done something never attempted before in the hope it would bring blessing to many.

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Prayer

An Examination of Prayer in the Light of the Scriptures

By

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INTRODUCTION

Prayer, like religion, is a universal fact. It is confined exclusively to the human race. Angels praise, but do not pray or intercede. As no race of men has ever been found without some form of religion, so none has been found without prayer. Even in the rudest and most revolting forms of Fetishism the instinct of prayer is present. The same is true, of course, of the more developed and higher human religions, like Mohammedanism, Hinduism, and others. The infidel may boast, and say in his heart "there is no God," but he also bears witness to the prayer instinct.

"Men, indeed, will be found to deny, or to undervalue the evidence of this instinct of prayer; but there are times which wring prayer from prayerless lips; times of danger, when all classes find prayer the most appropriate and natural utterance of their lips, and like the sailors in the story of Jonah, pray every man to his God; times of heart-fear, when the spirit sends up from the depths of confusion and darkness an exceeding bitter cry, wherein terror and doubt mingle with the unquenchable instinct of prayer; times when, perhaps, death is approaching, and the dark, unexplored confines of eternity begin to loom vast and vague upon an awakening conscience, and the firm citadel of stoutly maintained unbelief is swept away, and prayer rushes forth in such a despairing shriek as burst from the lips of a certain agnostic: 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul.' " *

We knew an old sea-faring man, who was saved by

*Dr. Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon.

the grace of God. He told us of the vicious life he had led, committing almost every crime, a blasphemer, cursing at every word, yet he said when sometimes death stared him in the face and there seemed to be no escape, he cried to God for deliverance. It is said of the infidel Voltaire, that when he once beheld a gorgeous mountain scene flooded by the glorious beams of the rising sun, he cried out, kneeling and uncovering his head, "I believe—I believe in Thee! O mighty God, I believe!"

The earliest records of the human race which we possess, the Accadian and Sumerian tablets, contain prayers addressed to different deities. What then is the source of this universal fact of prayer? If we call prayer an instinct, where does it come from? What is its origin?

These questions are easily answered. The entire human race possesses God-consciousness. Even the worshipper of a fetish sees behind the inanimate object he worships a higher being with power, which he tries to interest in his behalf. Furthermore, man knows his dependence; he needs help and protection. There are sickness and pain; famines and pestilences. In his life as a savage he is surrounded by wild beasts and innumerable dangers. Then there are the great catastrophes of nature, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes. The creature of the dust knows himself helpless and looks for help, not from man, but from the supreme Being whose existence is indelibly written in his bosom. This produces prayer. In the most simple analysis, prayer is the expression of human dependence on a higher power. Inasmuch as the con-

sciousness of God is universal, prayer is also the universal instinct of the entire race in every continent and from the very beginning of history.

Prayer in the Bible is one of the most prominent revelations. From Genesis to Revelation prayer is mentioned. The great actors in sacred history were all mighty men of prayer. Their faith and confidence in God, expressed by prayer is recorded throughout the Bible. Then there are the hundreds of prayer promises, the many encouragements to seek the presence of God, and the equally many evidences that God hears and answers prayer.

Yet there are deep mysteries connected with prayer, and the Bible does not give us a complete solution of these mysteries. On account of these philosophical difficulties some have taught the uselessness of prayer. It has been said that man lives under general laws, which in all cases must be fulfilled unalterably, and others claim that man is the master of his own destiny and therefore does not need to pray for external blessing at all. Still others think that the predestination of God renders prayer useless, that His wisdom and love has portioned out to each individual his or her destiny, and that prayer for this reason is needless.

We are not concerned in entering into these philosophical difficulties or to attempt an explanation. The purpose of this little volume is a different one. We want to trace the fact of prayer from the beginning to the end of the Word of God. We shall examine the different passages in which prayer is mentioned, point out the different forms of prayer, the circumstances under which the prayers were prayed, the answered

prayers, the unanswered prayers, and the prayers which have a prophetic significance, being connected with future events. We shall show the place of prayer in the lives of the Old Testament characters, the place of prayer and the promises of prayer as connected with the life of our Lord, and prayer in the Epistles. Then after this examination we shall give a summary as to prayer, pointing out the great value of prayer and its efficacy and conditions. There are many volumes written on prayer, books which teach "how to pray," and many others trying to explain prayer, while there are also many volumes of printed prayers to be used in private devotions or in public services. As far as we know, what we are doing in this volume has never been attempted before, and we hope that our examination of the Scriptures themselves as to prayer will bring blessing to many, and give new stimulus to prayer itself.

THE FIRST PART

PRAYER IN THE PENTATEUCH

The Book of Genesis

The first mention of prayer, that is, calling on the name of the Lord, is found at the close of the fourth chapter of Genesis. There can be no question that prayer was exercised before the birth of Enos. When Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain and obtained witness that he was righteous, there was undoubtedly confession of sin and prayer for mercy connected with it. But the Word of God does not give us this information.

Chapter iv:26—"*And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos; then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.*" Seth took, as the seed of the woman, the place of Abel. The name of the son of Seth, Enos, means "frail." In the meaning of his name we have evidently the reason why calling on the name of the Lord is here mentioned for the first time in the Word of God. The Cainites were engaged in the production of a great civilization. The Sethites, the godly, realized in the midst of increasing wickedness their frailty and their need of dependence on the Lord, and therefore they called on His name. Nothing is said of prayer in the chapter (Gen. v) which records the generations of the descendants of Seth. But we know these antediluvian saints, as they walked with God, as Enoch did, made daily use of prayer, as all saints in all ages have done. Nor do we find prayer mentioned in the history of Noah. He

found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. vi:8). "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. xi:7). He certainly must have been a great man of prayer as he also was a preacher of righteousness.

In the life of Abraham, the friend of God, prayer is very prominent. His first act of worship is recorded in *Chapter xii*:7. When he had reached the land to which he had gone in faith, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi:8), and the Lord appeared unto him again, he builded there an altar unto the Lord. The next altar he erected was between Bethel and Hai, and in connection with this altar we find the phrase "called upon the name of the Lord." He was a stranger in a strange land, surrounded by different tribes of idolators. He had followed the divine call of separation, and the Lord of Glory who had appeared unto him (Acts vii:2), who had led him out of the corruption of a land of idolatry, as Ur in Chaldea was, had brought him to the land of promise. And there he felt the need to call upon His name, no doubt for protection and direction as well. Yet Abraham at that time knew but little of the Lord who had so graciously led him forth and who had sustained him. Through Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and the king of peace, who met him after the slaughter of the kings, Abraham received the knowledge of who the Lord is on whose name he had called, and whom he worshipped at the different altars. Melchizedek revealed the Lord to Abraham as "the most high God,

possessor of heaven and earth." And Abraham, when the King of Sodom appeared, made use at once of this name (Gen. xiv:18-24). After this event a great change came in the spiritual experience of the friend of God. Up to now he had built altars and called upon the name of the Lord, but now prayer became real communion with the Lord. Abraham talked to Him as a friend talks to a friend.

In the beginning of the fifteenth chapter in Genesis we read that the Word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision. Then Abraham unburdened himself. In this prayer fellowship he told the Lord, what He well knew, that he was a childless old man. He told the Lord that He had not given him a seed. Then came a gracious answer. The assurance is given to him in answer to his complaint, that his seed should be like the stars of heaven. "And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." We have in this incident the first illustration in the Bible of what real communion in prayer is. Such intimate fellowship with the Lord is the privilege of all the children of God. But we must not overlook another lesson in the life of the friend of God. There is a gap in the life of Abraham covering thirteen years, during which nothing is recorded in the life of the man of faith. (See Gen. xvi:16 and Gen. xvii:1). There was a broken fellowship on account of Hagar.

Beautiful is the intimacy of the Lord with His friend as recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters. The Lord paid Abraham a visit in the form of a man, accompanied by two angels. Jehovah was a guest in Abraham's tent, and revealed His purpose as to Sodom

and Gomorrah. Then Abraham stood before the Lord and addressed Him in his famous prayer of intercession. He did not lift his eyes to heaven, but the Lord stood alongside of him and He graciously listened to his intercessory petitions. And finally it is recorded "The Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place." It is the first prayer of intercession recorded in the Word of God.

Chapter xix:18-22 contains a petition of Lot. We notice the great contrast between the prayer fellowship of Abraham and the petition of selfish Lot.

Chapter xx:17 reveals again Abraham as an intercessor. God had appeared unto Abimelech and told him that Abraham was a prophet and that he was to pray for him (verse 7). "So Abraham prayed unto God and God healed Abimelech."

In *Chapter xxi:16-20* God answers the cry of Hagar and her son Ishmael, and manifests His mercy to them. In the same chapter we find the record once more that Abraham, after having made a covenant with Abimelech, called upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God (verse 33).

Chapter xxiv:12-14 contains the prayer of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, whom Abraham had sent to fetch a bride for his son Isaac. It expresses in a charming way the simple, child-like dependence of the aged man upon the Lord. He trusted Him that the errand on which his beloved master had sent him might prove successful.

Chapter xxv:21. Here we find prayer mentioned for the first time in the life of Isaac. Rebekah was barren,

and Isaac intreated the Lord for her and his prayer was answered.

Chapter xxvi:24-25. The Lord appeared unto Isaac renewing the covenant blessings made unto his father Abraham. The passage mentions the only altar which Isaac built, and there he called on the name of the Lord.

Prayer to God, calling upon His name, is not mentioned in the chapter in which Jacob practiced his deception upon his father Isaac. There was great sorrow and grief in the family of the patriarch. Esau had married two Hittite women, and when Jacob had obtained the blessing, Esau sought to slay him, while Rebekah feared that Jacob also might take one of the Hittites to wife. Prayer might have changed things. Prayerlessness, as we shall find frequently in our study, was the source of failure and shame.

On the way to Haran Jacob had his remarkable dream, in which the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac appeared unto him. He saw the ladder of God and the angels ascending and descending on it. Then the Lord made the same covenant promises to the son of Isaac, which he had made to him and to his father. He assures him "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of (Genesis xxviii:10-15). Jacob had not sought the Lord; he had not built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord. The Lord sought him and spoke these gracious words. It is a striking illustration of the Grace of God. And Jacob realized that

such grace demanded a response from his side. He knew the Lord was in this place, and he made a solemn vow in the form of a bargain. God, in speaking to him, had made no condition, but Jacob said, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

The Lord kept His word and all His promises, but Jacob did not keep his promise vow. Many years come and go in which God prospers him and keeps him in every way. In all these years we do not find a single statement that Jacob sought the presence of the Lord, that he built an altar or called on the name of the Lord. It was the Lord who spoke to him and told him to return to his own land, with the renewed assurance, "I will be with thee" (Genesis xxi:3). Then he acknowledged that God had been with him. Then the angel of God appeared unto him in a dream, revealing Himself as the God of Bethel, reminding him of his vow and commanding him to return. But while Jacob testified to the goodness of God (verse 42) he did not seek His presence. On the way home the angels of God met him, but when he heard that Esau was on the way with four hundred men he became greatly afraid and distressed; then he began to pray.

Chapter xxxii:9-12. This first recorded prayer of Jacob acknowledges his own unworthiness and the great mercy and goodness of the Lord. Then he

prayed for deliverance on the ground of the words of unconditional promise the Lord had spoken to him about twenty years before.

Chapter xxxii:24-32. That night brought one of the greatest experiences in the life of Jacob. He was face to face with the Lord. In that night experience of prayer and wrestling his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. Hosea, the prophet, mentions the Peniel scene—"Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto Him" (Hos. xii:4). Then we find him, reconciled to his brother Esau, back in the land, but before he erected the altar called "El-elohe Israel," he had built a house. Nor do we read that he called upon the name of the Lord, nor did he remember his vow. God had to lead him through deep waters of sorrow and shame. Two of his sons, Simeon and Levi, committed a vile deed, and when Jacob sat broken-hearted God spoke unto him.

Chapter xxxiv:1. He told him to go to Bethel and to erect an altar there where the Lord had first appeared unto him. Obedience is yielded at once. God appeared unto him several times and talked with him.

There is nothing said about prayer in the entire story of Joseph. Many times we read that the Lord was with him and prospered him. Prayer was certainly his refuge from the day he was sold by his own brethren into slavery until the time when he occupied the exalted position in Egypt. Through prayer he must have obtained strength to live a life of holiness, and through prayer he received wisdom from above to make known future things.

The last time prayer is mentioned in Genesis is in connection with the journey of Jacob to Egypt. *Genesis xlvi:1-4* contains this record. In the beginning of the journey Jacob approached the Lord with sacrifices. He seemed to have been fearful about the long journey into the land of Egypt. The Lord quieted his fears.

The Book of Exodus

The second book of the Bible begins with the moans and the groans of an enslaved people. The children of Israel are under the whip of cruel taskmasters. But we do not find a word about prayer in all their afflictions. That some were godly and praying may be learned from the case of the parents of Moses, who hid him by faith for three months, and that could hardly have been done without prayer. Moses became a great man of prayer. His wonderful choice (Heb. xi:24-26) must have been the result of communion with the Lord.

When finally the lot of the children of Israel became still worse, they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. But here again we notice that it does not say "they cried unto the Lord." But His time to act had come. "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob, and God looked upon the children of Israel, and had respect unto them" (Ex. ii:24-25).

Moses is the divinely chosen deliverer. He beheld Jehovah, in the form of the angel of the Lord, in the burning bush. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and

have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows" (Ex. iii:7). Then He promises their deliverance. Here are the fundamentals of true prayer. He sees; He hears; He knows, and He is able to lead out and to bring in. This assurance gives faith boldness to approach Him and to call on His name.

We do not follow the communion which took place between God and Moses, whom He had chosen as the deliverer of His people. Moses was reluctant to accept the commission. When finally Moses pleaded his slowness of speech, the Lord said unto him, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (*Ex. iv: 10-12*). God pledges His own power to uphold Moses in his confessed weakness. He delights in taking what is weak and manifesting through it His own power.

Confessed weakness and unworthiness is not only pleasing in His sight but makes it possible for Him to display His power in answer to prayer. We shall meet this great fact many times in our examination of the Holy Scriptures.

When the judgment plagues came upon Egypt Moses acted a number of times as intercessor, praying for Egypt and Pharaoh, till the king of Egypt had hardened his heart so that the Lord had to harden him (Rom. ix:17). But Moses' prayers were all answered and the Lord did as he requested for the ungodly nation (Ex. viii:8; 25-31; ix:27-35; x:16-19). These were remarkable answers to prayer, that by the inter-

cession of Moses divine judgments stopped suddenly. How often the world has appealed to God's people in time of distress to pray so that calamities might be averted or removed, yet, as it was with Egypt, no true repentance followed.

Chapter xiv:15. The redeemed nation, having been delivered out of Egypt, faced a terrible situation. Behind them were the hundreds of war chariots of Egypt and the armies of Pharaoh. Before them was the Red Sea. There was no way of escape on either side. They were sore afraid and wished themselves back to the Egyptian bondage. But God had brought them into this condition that He might show what a God He is, and what He can do for His people. Such extremities should not produce murmurs but prayer, for they afford God an opportunity to show what He is able to do in deliverance. Then Moses cried unto the Lord, and God made a way through the Red Sea and delivered Israel from her enemies. How many times since He has graciously answered the prayer of faith and made the impossible possible by His divine intervention! The first song of praise is recorded in Exodus xv.

Chapter xv:25. In answer to Moses' prayer the bitter waters of Marah were made sweet. God could have done it without any means whatever, but He showed Moses a tree which had to be immersed in the waters of Marah, a blessed type of Him who is the tree of life and went into the bitter waters of death.

Chapter xvii:4. The constant refuge of Moses was prayer, as it should be the daily refuge and practice of every child of God. The murmuring people were

ready to stone him because they had no water. The Lord might have sent an abundant rain, but He commanded Moses to smite the rock, and from the smitten rock gushed forth the waters. Still another type of Him who is the smitten rock of ages, who gives the waters of life freely.

In all the law which God gave to Israel, the moral law, as well as the instructions as to levitical worship, prayer is not mentioned once. Only in Deuteronomy xxvi is a prayer form given. As is well known, the priesthood of Aaron and Aaron's sons was typical of the priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of believers. When Moses received the law and ordinances he was in the presence of the Lord and communed with Him.

The next mention of prayer in Exodus is in *Chapter xxxii:10-14.* It is a great prayer of intercession in behalf of the idolatrous people, who had made and worshipped the golden calf. The Lord threatened to consume them with His wrath and make of Moses a nation of destiny. Moses in his prayer reminded the Lord that He had delivered His people out of Egypt; that it would not be to His glory and honor to slay them in the wilderness. He requested that He turn from His fierce wrath, and reminded Him of the covenant promises, sworn to by Himself, the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Israel. His intercession was effectual and the Lord did not deal with them in His wrath.

Chapter xxxii:30-33. This is the second prayer of intercession. It is one of the most noble prayers in the Bible. He told the Lord of the people's great sin. He asked for His forgiveness and offered to have his

name blotted out of God's book if such forgiveness should not be granted. It reminds us of Romans ix:3.

Chapter xxxiii:11-23. Moses is seen in this paragraph in blessed communion with the Lord. "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." He received the most gracious assurances, which every child of God can claim. "I know thee by name, and thou hast found grace in my sight." "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." The prayer "Show me Thy glory," remained unanswered. The Lord put His praying servant in the clift of a rock and permitted him an after-look; as the result of His presence with the Lord his face shone. (See 2 Cor. iii.)

The Book of Leviticus

Prayer is not mentioned in the Book of Leviticus, nor is there found a single prayer. The different offerings commanded in the beginning of this book reveal the right approach of Israel into the presence of the Lord. They all typify Christ's atoning and substitutionary death.

The Book of Numbers

Chapter xi:2. Moses' prayer of intercession quenched the fire of the Lord at Taberah.

Chapter xi:11-15. In this prayer of Moses, the man of God is greatly discouraged and complains of the heavy burden resting upon him. Then in great despondency he did what Elijah did after him; he asked the Lord to slay him. The Lord surely knew before

Moses ever told Him what heavy burdens he bore and the distressing experiences he was passing through. But the Lord wants to hear the voice of His own in intimate communion; He loves to hear and to bear their burdens and then display His power and wisdom in gracious deliverance. It was so in the case of Moses, as we learn from the rest of this chapter.

Chapter xii:13. Moses intercedes for the healing of his own sister Miriam, who had been suddenly stricken with leprosy. His prayer for healing was answered.

Chapter xiv:13-19. This passage contains the last great intercessory prayer of Moses for the people. They had murmured against Moses and Aaron. They were ready to retrace their steps and go back to Egypt. Only Joshua and Caleb remained faithful and tried to stem the serious rebellion. Then the Lord spoke and announced that He was ready to smite them all with pestilence, disinherit them and make of Moses a greater and mightier nation than they. This is the second offer God made to Moses. (See Ex. xxxii:10.) In this intercessory prayer Moses quotes the Lord's own words which he had heard from His lips (Ex. xxxiv: 6-9) and then with the assurance the Lord had given, as to His own gracious character, Moses asked for the pardoning of the sinful nation. Moses in his great intercessory prayers is a wonderful type of Him who appears in the presence of God for His people as their priest and advocate.

Chapter xvi records a brief prayer of Moses on account of the apostasy of Korah. This time he did not pray for pardon but for judgment.

Chapter xxi:7. The fact that Moses prayed for the

people when the fiery serpents were among them is here stated. The prayer itself is not recorded. The prayer was answered by the divine instruction to make a serpent of brass. The significance of it is known to every Christian (John iii:14-15).

Chapter xxvii:5. "And Moses brought their cause before the Lord." Moses was in doubt as to the request of the daughters of Zelophehad. Therefore he laid the whole matter before the Lord, who graciously granted what had been requested.

Chapter xxvii:15-17. Moses, after his soon-coming death had been revealed, prayed for the appointment of a leader for the congregation of the Lord, so that they might not be as sheep which have no shepherd. His prayer was answered at once, and Joshua was solemnly ordained to the leadership.

The Book of Deuteronomy

We find but little concerning prayer in this book. Moses rehearses Israel's history of failure, and the law is re-stated with certain additions. We quote the few passages in which prayer is mentioned.

Chapter iii:23-25. This prayer of Moses is not recorded in the Book of Numbers. He prayed for his own entrance into the promised land, but the Lord did not grant him his request.

Chapter ix:20, 26. This is a reference to Israel's idolatry in worshipping the golden calf, and we learn from it that Moses also prayed for his brother Aaron.

Chapter xxvi:5-15. Here we have the only prayer forms given in the Pentateuch. The forms were to be used at the time when the first fruits were offered.

PRAYER IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The Book of Joshua

This book, which records Israel's entrance into the land and the possession of it, contains much encouragement for faith and trust in the Lord. There are but a few references to prayer.

Chapter vii:6-9. After the Lord had given Jericho into the hands of His people they attempted to conquer Ai, but were sadly defeated, on account of Achan's sin. Nor do we read in connection with the expedition against Ai that they asked counsel of the Lord. Then Joshua, in deepest agony, fell to the earth upon his face before the ark, rent his clothes and cried unto the Lord. Then the Lord uncovered Achan's sin.

Chapter ix:14. This chapter records a failure on account of prayerlessness. The Gibeonites had sneaked into the congregation of Israel. They deceived Joshua and the elders with their worn-out garments and their mouldy provisions. Their falsehoods were believed, so that Joshua made peace with them as well as a league, and let them live. "They asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." How different it would have been if Joshua had asked the Lord.

Chapter x:12-14. This is one of the greatest prayer-miracles in the whole Bible. We are not concerned in its explanation, nor in the ridicule which infidelity and modernism has heaped upon this divine record. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? That He manifested His power in answer to prayer in a very extraordinary manner is vouched for by the words,

"there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

The Book of Judges

Though this book records one of the saddest periods of Israel's history of sin and shame, prayer and prayer answers are very prominent.

Chapter i:1. After the death of Joshua, they asked counsel of the Lord who was to go up first against the Canaanites. The Lord answered at once.

Chapters iii:9-15. iv:3. vi:6-7. x:10-12. These passages tell us of the different enslavements through which Israel passed on account of their departure from the Lord. But when they cried unto the Lord in their distress He answered their cry and sent deliverers. It seems as if the Lord just waited for their cry to prove to them afresh that He is the covenant keeping and prayer answering Lord He was in their past history, and which He always will be.

Chapter x:15-16. When the Lord threatened no future deliverance for them, the children of Israel turned to Him with confession of sin and self-judgment. The Lord was grieved then for the misery of His people. Confession of sin and self-judgment are absolutely necessary to effectual prayer. With these soul exercises the Lord is well pleased.

Chapter xiii:8-9. The prayer of Manoah, intreating the Lord to send again the angel of God who had appeared to his wife. His prayer was answered and the angel came the second time.

Chapter xv:18. Samson's prayer. He was probably

dying of thirst after his great and strenuous victory over the Philistines. Then he called on the Lord and He answered his cry and provided water in a miraculous way.

Chapter xvi:28. Samson's second prayer to give him strength to be avenged. The Lord answered him, and his eventful life closed with a great catastrophe in which an enormous number of Israel's enemies were wiped out.

Chapter xx:23, 27. Prayer is mentioned twice in connection with the awful tragedy in which nearly the entire tribe of Benjamin was destroyed.

The First Book of Samuel

As nothing is said about prayer in the book of Ruth we turn next to the first book of Samuel. We find a beautiful illustration of prayer and its gracious results in the opening chapters.

Chapter i:9-18. Hannah, one of the wives of Elkanah, was childless and suffered much on account of this affliction. We see her weeping excessively and pouring out her soul in the presence of the Lord. It was not an audible prayer, for Eli only saw her lips moving but her voice was not heard. In her prayer she vowed that if the Lord granted her a man-child she would dedicate him to the service of the Lord. Her prayer was answered. It is beautiful to see her coming back in due time to the house of the Lord at Shiloh and giving the little boy to the Lord. As long as he lived she lent him to the Lord. As Hannah gave Samuel, her prayer-answer, to the Lord, so should we come before Him also with our answered requests.

Chapter ii:1-11. This is the prayer of Hannah. It is more than a prayer, more than an outburst of inspired praise; it is a great prophecy.

Chapter vii:5, 8, 9-10. Samuel became a great man of prayer. How else could it be? He was the result of the believing prayer of a godly mother and lent to the Lord in an act of faith. It was a memorable gathering at Mizpeh. The children of Israel had returned to the Lord, having confessed their sins and abandoned the idol-gods. Then Samuel interceded for them. When the Philistines appeared to trouble Israel they requested Samuel to continue to pray for them. Samuel cried to the Lord and was heard. God gave Israel a great victory.

Chapter viii:6-7. This marks a critical time in Israel's history. Samuel's sons were a failure, and as Samuel was getting old the people demanded a king. It displeased Samuel greatly and he prayed at once to the Lord and received a comforting answer from Him.

Chapter viii:21, 22. In spite of Samuel's warning the people persisted in having a king. Then Samuel went again to the Lord and rehearsed all the words the people had spoken in the ears of the Lord. Did not the Lord hear all that had been said? He is omniscient and knows all things. But Samuel told the Lord about it in child-like trust, and the Lord repeated His former instruction.

Chapter x:22. Samuel called another assembly at Mizpeh. When Saul was missing they enquired of the Lord and He revealed his hiding place.

Chapter xii:16-19. After a solemn and impressive address Samuel called upon the Lord and He answered

with thunder and rain. It was at the time of the wheat harvest, that is during the dry season.

Chapter xii:23. Samuel assured the people that he would never cease from praying for them. It seems Samuel considered it a sin if he did not pray for God's people.

Chapter xiv:35, 37. The reign of Saul was characterized by prayerlessness. Here the first altar which Saul built is mentioned. But when he asked counsel of God, he received no answer.

Chapter xxiii:2, 3. David, the man after God's own heart, enquired twice of the Lord concerning the way he was to take. He knew the Lord would guide him in the right way. He had perfect confidence in the Lord (chapter xvii:37). This dependence on the Lord and seeking Him at all times and under all circumstances was pleasing to God.

Chapter xxiii:10-12. Then he enquired of the Lord by means of the Ephod. We do not know exactly how this was done. But the Lord answered the heart-cry of His anointed.

Chapter xxx:6-8. When in the greatest distress, and everything seeming to go against him, David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He must have sat down and meditated on all the Lord had done in the past; what a mighty and merciful Lord He is; then he sought His face and enquired of Him. The answer came speedily and God's blessing rested upon him when he pursued the enemy.

The Second Book of Samuel

Chapter ii:1. This passage gives another evidence of the dependence of David on the Lord. He asked for directions as to his movements.

Chapter v:19, 23. In his war against the Philistines he enquired twice of the Lord. His prayers were answered and he smote the Philistines. The Lord won the battle (verse 24). Prayer for guidance, and dependence on the Lord, still gives victory in every conflict.

Chapter vii:18-29. Nathan, the prophet, had communicated to David the great covenant, known as the Davidic covenant. After he had listened to the most gracious words the king went and sat before the Lord. He worshipped before Him, poured out his heart in praise and adoration, acknowledged His greatness and his own nothingness.

Chapter xi. This is the saddest chapter in the life of the man after God's own heart. The word "enquire" is also found in this chapter. But he did not enquire of the Lord. David tarried in idleness in Jerusalem and when he beheld from the roof of his house a beautiful woman, he enquired who she was. Had he enquired of the Lord if he should do such a thing, he would not have become an adulterer and a murderer.

Chapter xii:13. David confessed his sin and he received the assurance that the Lord had put away his sin. At that time of confession he wrote the fifty-first Psalm, that great penitential heart-cry.

Chapter xii:15-23. This is a touching prayer scene. He prayed for the recovery of the sick baby, the child

of Uriah's wife. When the child had died he gave a splendid testimony as to his faith in existence after death.

Nothing is said about prayer in chapters xiii-xx with the exception of chapter xv:31, where we find an ejaculatory prayer of David. These chapters contain records of sin and shame, the rebellion of Absalom, the son of David, and the flight of the king.

Chapter xxi:1. David enquired as to the reason of the three years' famine.

Chapter xxii contains his great Psalm of deliverance. (See Psalm xviii.)

Chapter xxiv:17. David's confession of sin and request that His hand in judgment might rest upon himself and his father's house.

The First Book of Kings

Chapter iii:5-14. The Lord appeared in a dream to Solomon and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." In the prayer of Solomon we find first an acknowledgment of God's great kindness and mercy to his father David. This is followed by a confession of his weakness and helplessness. Then he uttered his request for an understanding heart. The Lord answered his prayer and Solomon received marvelous wisdom, and the Lord added to him the things he had not asked, riches and honor.

Chapter viii:12-61. Here we find the great dedicatory prayer which Solomon uttered in the presence of the people after the house of the Lord was finished. It seems every possible need is covered in this great prayer. The Lord assured him that his prayer and

supplication had been heard. But it is a striking fact that while in chapters iii-x we read much of Solomon's great wisdom, great riches, his peaceful reign and the wonderful prosperity which attended this reign, we do not read anywhere of the prayer habit of his father David. He did evidently not seek His face as David did. The heighth of his glory was reached with the visit of the Queen of Sheba.

Chapter xi reveals his awful apostasy. He surrounded himself with many strange women and they turned his heart from the Lord, who had appeared unto him twice. Solomon became a worshipper of idols and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Here again we may judge that prayerlessness led to this tremendous failure. It seems Solomon never returned to the Lord.

Chapter xiii:6. The prayer of an unnamed man of God out of Judah. When he had spoken a prophecy concerning the altar where King Jeroboam worshipped the idol calves, the king demanded the seizure of the prophet. The king's hand dried up. Then the king requested prayer that his hand might be restored. The prayer of the man of God was at once answered and the hand was healed.

Chapter xvii:1. This verse introduces us to Elijah the Tishbite. He announced to idolatrous King Ahab of Israel that there should be no dew and no rain according to his word. Nothing is said here of prayer. But James tells us why Elijah could speak so authoritatively. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of

three years and six months" (James v:17). His prayer closed the heavens. We doubt not that all this great man of God did was the result of earnest, prolonged and believing prayer.

Chapter xvii:20-22. The widow's son had died. Elijah prayed, "O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again." The Lord heard and the child revived.

Chapter xviii:37. Elijah's prayer that fire might fall from heaven and consume the sacrifice as an evidence that not Baal, but the Lord Jehovah is God. The brief prayer was speedily answered.

Chapter xviii:42-45. In answer to his prayer the heavens were opened and rain fell after a dearth of three and a half years. (See James v:18.) It was after the seventh prayer that his servant announced the coming of a little cloud out of the sea. It was sign enough for Elijah that his prayer would now be answered, and he stopped praying. The next chapter (verse 4) records his request to die.

The Second Book of Kings

Chapter iv:33-34. Elisha, the ordained successor of Elijah, like Elijah a great man of prayer, prayed for the dead child of the Shunammite. His prayer was answered and the child lived again. No doubt prayer was connected with all the miracles he did.

Chapter vi:17-18. Three prayers of Elisha are given here. He prayed that the eyes of his fearful servant might be opened; he saw then the unseen hosts of the Lord. He prayed next that the people, Israel's enemies, might be stricken with blindness. The Lord an-

swered, and when they had been misled into Samaria in answer to Elisha's prayer their eyes were opened again.

Chapter xiii:4. King Jehoahaz was a wicked man; he did evil in the sight of the Lord. But when he besought the Lord, the Lord hearkened unto him, because He loved His people and saw their great oppression by Syria.

Chapter xviii:5. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel." This is the record of the pious King Hezekiah, in whose life prayer had such a prominent place.

Chapter xix:1. After Rab-shakeh had uttered his vicious words of blasphemy, and when Hezekiah heard of it he went at once into the house of the Lord. He also sent a special messenger to Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah announced that the king of Assyria would be unsuccessful in his expedition against Jerusalem and would die in his own land. Then Rab-shakeh sent messengers to Hezekiah defying the God of Israel again. The message was in the form of a letter. The king went at once with it to the house of the Lord and spread the letter before Him. Then he prayed for help and deliverance (verses 8-19). His prayer was answered. That night the angel of the Lord went out and smote the camp of the Assyrians.

Chapter xx:1-7. Sick unto death, the king was visited by Isaiah, who predicted his death. Then Hezekiah cried to the Lord and wept sore. It was a brief prayer, and the prophet had not yet left the premises when the Lord told him to go back to the king, that his prayer had been heard and that there would be added to his life fifteen years. Then Isaiah had a lump of

figs laid on the boil, and he recovered. The same chapter (verse 11) gives the prayer of Isaiah, in answer of which the shadow on a sun-dial went ten degrees backward.

Chapter xxii:19. From this verse we learn that Josiah was likewise a man of prayer.

The First Book of Chronicles

Chapter iv:10. The prayer of Jabez requesting blessing and that he might be kept from evil. And God granted him that which he requested.

Chapter v:20. The sons of Reuben, the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh made war with the Hagarites. They gained the victory because in the midst of the battle they cried to God, and He was intreated of them, because they put their trust in Him.

The sad record of Saul contained in *Chapter x:13-14* confirms our previous statement that his failure was connected with the lack of prayer. He enquired not of the Lord.

Chapter xvi:7-35. David wrote a special Psalm of praise and thanksgiving and gave it to Asaph and his brethren, the sweet singers in Israel.

Chapter xxix:10-19 contains the final prayer and praise of King David. The final petition is for his son Solomon, and the prayer was answered.

The Second Book of Chronicles

Chapter xiv:11. King Asa in a great battle prayed to the Lord. He acknowledged His unlimited power, and He answered and gave victory over the enemy.

Chapter xv:4. Though Israel was for a long season

without God, that is out of touch with Him, without a teaching priest and the Law, yet when in their trouble they turned unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them.

Chapter xvi:12. Here is another failure on account of lack of prayer.

Chapter xx:3-12. When a great multitude came against Jehoshaphat, this king sought the presence of the Lord and proclaimed a fast. He uttered a great prayer, and a remarkable victory was granted unto him.

Chapter xxxiii:12-13. Manasseh was one of the most wicked men who ever lived, a monster in human form. When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord and humbled himself greatly before the Lord. He prayed and intreated of Him, and God in His infinite mercy answered his prayer and brought him back to Jerusalem.

The Book of Ezra

This book contains a great prayer of Ezra, the pious scribe. It is found in *Chapter ix:6-15.* At the time of the evening sacrifice Ezra arose with his garment and mantle rent, fell upon his knees, spread out his hands unto the Lord and then prayed. He prayed a great prayer of confession of sins and humiliation. This prayer was followed by action in putting away that which was against the will and the Word of God.

The Book of Nehemiah

The whole restoration movement under Ezra and Nehemiah was a prayer movement in dependence on the Lord. The Book of Nehemiah reveals this more

than the record of Ezra. *Chapter i:4-11* contains the first prayer of Nehemiah. It was occasioned by the report he received from Hanani concerning the condition of the remnant and of Jerusalem. The prayer begins with confession of sins; then he reminds the Lord of His own promises. In his final petition he requests the Lord that he might find mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes, whose cup-bearer he was.

Chapter ii:4. In the month of Nisan his prayer was answered. The King noticed the sad face of his servant, and Nehemiah acquainted him with the great burden upon his heart. Then the King urged him to make a request. "So I prayed to the God of heaven." That is Nehemiah, while facing the king, prayed in his heart to the God of heaven. Nehemiah used the ejaculatory form of prayer frequently. See *Chapter iv:4-9. v:19. vi:14. xiii:14-22.*

In *Chapter ix* there is a lengthy prayer consisting mostly in a review of Israel's past history and failure, and a remembrance of God's mercy.

PRAYER IN THE POETICAL BOOKS

The Book of Job

Some of the greatest words of faith and trust spoken by human lips are found in this ancient book. One of the greatest is found in *Chapter i*:21. God-fearing Job had sustained unspeakable losses. He fell on the ground and worshipped, and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Chapter v:8 contains a brief mention of prayer by one of Job's friends, Eliphaz the Temanite. *Chapter xiii:14* is another great utterance by suffering Job. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." *Chapter xxi:15* raises the question, "What profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?"

In *Chapter xxii:27* Eliphaz assures Job that the Almighty will hear prayer. Elihu speaks of prayer and God's favor obtained through prayer.

Chapter xxxiii:26. In the last chapter of this remarkable book we see Job as an intercessor. His three friends are commanded to go to Job, and that he would pray for them. *Chapter xlii:8;* and when Job prayed for his friends the Lord turned his captivity and gave to Job twice as much as he had before (verse 10).

The Book of Psalms

This is the great book of prayer and praise in the Bible. It has been the most beloved book of prayer

of the saints of God in all ages. It is still so. Above all it might be called the prayer-book of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not in the sense that He was obliged to use the prayers found in this book. His own Spirit gave prophetically expression of the exercises of His holy soul when He walked amongst men. Perhaps when praying alone on the mountain tops or the desert places He poured out His heart in the presence of the Father in the language of many of the Psalms. His sufferings in Himself, His loneliness, His life of dependence and trust are all pre-written in many of the Psalms. But more than that His sufferings as the sin-bearer are found in many of the Psalms. The outstanding one is the twenty-second Psalm. His death on the cross is marvelously pictured in this great prophecy. Then in many other Psalms we find His prayers telling out His future sufferings, the physical sufferings and the soul agony He passed through. In all this we cannot enter into detail. Nor can we tabulate the hundreds of prayers for help and deliverance recorded in this book, the prayers for mercy and forgiveness of sins, the calls out of deepest distress, and many other appeals for divine interposition in time of need and danger. It is not too much said when we state that every emotion of the souls of men is found expressed somewhere in the Psalms. Besides this we find in the Psalms many utterances of praise for prayer heard, and prayer answered. The book is a prayer-mine; its riches and treasures can never be exhausted. Here faith and prayer find their encouragement. And if we examine our most spiritual hymns of praise in Christian hymnology we discover

that hundreds of them originated in some prayer or praise found in this book.

All believers know these facts and for this reason love the Psalms, and use them more frequently than any other portion of the Old Testament. But there are certain prayers found in the Psalms which have greatly puzzled believers. We mean the so-called imprecatory prayers. Prayers which implore God to destroy the enemies of God's people; prayers which ask their damnation, that they might perish and be consumed by the wrath of God. (See Psalm lviii:6-10). In explanation of the difficulty we point out that these imprecatory prayers are prophetic. Christians could not pray these prayers, for we are told to love our enemies and pray for those who despitefully use us. But the time will come when the godly remnant of Israel, during the great tribulation, will be surrounded by their Gentile enemies, who plan their destruction. At that time these prayers will be prayed and then the Lord will answer them also by His glorious manifestation, when He will deal with Israel's enemies.

The Book of Proverbs

In Proverbs, prayer and trust in the Lord are also mentioned. We refer to *chapters iii:5; xvi:20; xxviii: 25; xxix:25*. The prayers of the upright are the delight of the Lord, a statement which we find in *chapter xv:8*. "He heareth the prayer of the righteous" (*Chapter xv:29*). One more passage mentions prayer—*chapter xxviii:9*. The man who turns his ear from the law, his prayer is an abomination.

PRAYER IN THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

The Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah i:14-15. The many prayers of Israel were not heard, because they lived in sin and in unrighteousness. *Isaiah vi:5* records the prayer of Isaiah when he beheld the glory of the Lord.

Isaiah xxvi:3-4. This precious word is found in one of Israel's glory songs, after their restoration. Verses 12-19 contain a prayer of the believing, God-fearing remnant. *Chapters xxxvi-xxxviii* contain the historical record of Hezekiah and his prayer life, which we have already quoted and examined in the second book of Kings.

Most blessed is the prayer and faith promise, so much beloved by the people of God, written in *chapter xl:28-31.* What an encouragement to wait on the Lord and to trust in Him! Equally helpful to prayer are other promises in this section of Isaiah. We mention especially *chapters xli:10* and *xliii:2.* The many other promises found in the chapters which follow have a special reference to the remnant of Israel in the future, but faith enjoys them now as well. *Chapter lxii:6-7* encourages prayer for the peace of Jerusalem.

Chapters lxiii:17; lxiv:1-12 is a great prophetic prayer which will ascend to heaven at the close of the present age, and this prayer, prayed by believing Jewish lips will be answered by His personal and glorious return. *Chapter lxv:24* is a millennial prayer promise.

The Prophet Jeremiah

The ministry of Jeremiah, rightfully called the weeping prophet, was of a different character from the ministry of Isaiah. While Isaiah, like every other messenger of Jehovah, was a man of prayer, we do not find his individual prayers recorded. It is the opposite in the book of Jeremiah. *Chapter i:4-10* are Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office and contains the prophet's first prayer, so pleasing to the Lord, for he acknowledged his own helplessness (Verse 6). *Chapter iii:22-25* is a penitential prayer. *Chapter iv:10* is an ejaculatory prayer of the prophet; and verses 19-26 are another passionate prayer outburst followed by a vision. *Chapter v:3* is a mournful appeal to the Lord on account of the condition of the people. In *chapter vii:16* the prophet is told not to make intercession for the people, for the Lord would not answer. This command is repeated in *chapters xi:14* and *xiv:11*. This shows that the prayer of intercession, when there is no true repentance, self-judgment and a turning to the Lord, is unavailing. *Chapter x:23-25* is a beautiful prayer of the broken-hearted prophet; the last verse is a prayer corresponding to the imprecatory prayers of the Psalms. *Chapter xii:1-4* is another passionate prayer of this great man of God. In the next prayer of *chapter xiv:7-9* there is a confession of sin and an appeal to the Lord not to leave His people. *Chapter xiv:13* contains a brief prayer on account of the false prophets; the Lord answered His servant immediately. The prayer of Jeremiah in *chapter xv:15-18* is very interesting. He tells the Lord of his own suffering. Then

he speaks of the comfort he found in His Word, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." There was a gracious response.

Chapter xvii:13-18. This prayer is addressed to the Lord as "the hope of Israel" and contains a personal appeal against those who persecuted the prophet. The prayer in *xviii:19* was occasioned by the devices of the enemies of Jeremiah. It has an imprecatory character. *Chapter xx:7-18* is a prayer of despair in which the prophet cursed the day in which he was born. There was no answer from the Lord to this prayer.

In *Chapter xxxii:16-25* is recorded a more lengthy prayer of Jeremiah. In this prayer, which followed a certain land transaction, the prophet expressed his faith in the Lord by saying, "there is nothing too hard for Thee." The Lord answered him at once confirming his utterance, "Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" Then follow some of the blessed national promises of restoration. *Chapter xxxiii:3* is the Lord's invitation to call upon Him and the promise of His answer. Zedekiah sent a delegation to Jeremiah, according to *chapter xxxvii:3*, asking the prophet to pray to Jehovah for Zedekiah the king. The request was evidently not granted, for as we have seen, the Lord had told Jeremiah not to pray any more for the people, because He would not answer.

While the prophet had been commanded several times not to pray for the unbelieving, apostate portion of the nation, yet when the leaders of the remnant appealed to him to intercede in their behalf, Jeremiah

responded at once. Their request was, "That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." (*Chapter xlii:3.*) Ten days later the answer came to Jeremiah (verses 7-21).

The greater part of the book of Lamentations is in the form of prayers of confession and repentance. We call special attention to *Chapter i:18-22; ii:20-22; iii; v.*

We find in the **Prophet Ezekiel** hardly any mention of prayer. In *Chapter ix:8* he agonizes for the remnant of Israel. The same prayer is repeated in *Chapter xi:13.*

The Prophet Daniel

Daniel exemplifies prayer in a most precious way. When he and his companions were carried as young men into captivity, they undoubtedly prayed much. His noble purpose (chapter i:8) must have been the result of earnest prayer, and the Lord answered and honored his faith. In *Chapter ii:17-18* we find the record of a notable prayer-meeting in Babylon. Prayer was the refuge of Daniel and his three companions in the hour of great danger. Then God answered immediately by making the forgotten dream of the king known unto Daniel. And how earnestly Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego must have prayed before they spoke the words of faith and loyalty on account of which they were cast into the burning furnace! Then prayer was answered and the promise of Isaiah *xliii:2* was fulfilled.

Interesting information is contained in *Chapter vi:10.* It was Daniel's custom, perhaps throughout his long and useful life, to kneel in prayer three times a day,

with his windows open toward Jerusalem, praying and giving thanks. His enemies found him thus after the blasphemous royal statute had been made. His faith was gloriously honored, for God delivered him from the lions' mouths. In *Chapter vii* we see him seeking information as to his own vision and its meaning.

Chapter ix contains the great prayer of the aged prophet. He was reading the messages of Jeremiah, and when he found certain promises as to the duration of the captivity he turned to the Lord in prayer and sought His face. Here is a valuable hint as to how to pray. The right atmosphere for prayer is created by the reading of the Word of God. Before we can acceptably speak to the Lord, He must speak to our hearts by His own Word. The prayer of Daniel was a prayer of confession of sin in behalf of His people. He included himself. He acknowledged the guilt of the nation as his own. It was an unfinished prayer. Before he came to the close, "while he was speaking" the heavenly messenger interrupted him and brought him a great message from the throne of God. As soon as Daniel had begun his confessions and supplications the angel Gabriel was commanded to fly swiftly from the third heaven to bring Daniel the answer.

In *Chapter x* we behold the prophet again in deep soul exercise. The answer he sought in prayer was delayed three weeks on account of "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," which must mean some powerful agent of the prince of the power in the air, that is Satan. The last prayer of Daniel is recorded in *Chapter xii:8.*

In the prophet **Hosea** we find a prophetic prayer

which will yet be prayed by the future remnant of Israel. It is contained in *Chapter vi:1-2.* **Joel**, the earliest of the prophets, witnessed a great locust plague, which devastated the whole land. He called the people to repentance. Then he prayed, crying to the Lord, as we learn from *Chapter i:19-20.* In *Chapter ii:12-14* is his call to the nation to repent and to turn unto the Lord. The promises of restoration follow. The great prophecies connected with this we have explained in our exposition of this interesting prophetic book.

In the **Book of Amos** we find only two brief ejaculatory prayers, *Chapter vii:2 and 5.* There is no mention of prayer in **Obadiah.**

The prayer of the prophet **Jonah** in the belly of the fish, *Chapter ii*, is composed nearly entirely of quotations from the Psalms. When the castaway acknowledged that salvation is of the Lord, the Lord spoke to the fish to give up Jonah. In *chapter iv:1-3*, we find a second prayer of the prophet, in which he asks to die.

The last chapter of the prophet **Micah,** *chapter vii* is a beautiful prayer. It begins with a lament over the condition of God's people, and ends with the assurance of God's mercy and forgiveness. The prophet **Nahum,** testifying against Niniveh and announcing prophetically its coming destruction, does not mention prayer.

It is different with **Habakkuk.** Brief is his prophecy but it contains several prayers. His name is suggestive. It means "to embrace" and "to be embraced." He embraced his beloved people, embraced God in prayer in their behalf; then God embraced him by answering his petitions. In *Chapter i:1-4* he cries to

Jehovah. Verses 5-11 contain the answer of the Lord. Following the answer, *verses 12-17*, is another plea of Habakkuk. *Chapter ii:1-4* shows him in a waiting attitude, and the message which the Lord gave to the great man of prayer. The final prayer of Habakkuk is written in *Chapter iii:1-2*. It was answered by a great prophetic vision, which ends with the personal testimony of the prophet as to his trust and his joy in the Lord.

Zephaniah records no prayer, but we find two exhortations to seek the Lord and to wait upon Him (ii:3; iii:8). We find no prayer in the book of **Haggai.** In **Zechariah** prayer is mentioned but once, in *Chapter xii:10*. It is prophetic of the time when the remnant of Israel will turn to the Lord and look upon Him whom they pierced. From **Malachi** we learn that in his sad days of declension and apostasy there was a God-fearing company who trusted in the Lord, and that the Lord hearkened unto their cry.

PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
THE FOUR GOSPELS AND ACTS

The Gospel of Matthew

Chapter vi:5-15 contains the instructions of our Lord as to prayer. He emphasizes secret prayer and warns against vain repetitions. Ritualistic Christendom practices the very things against which our Lord warns. Then He gave to His disciples the beautiful prayer which is generally called "The Lord's Prayer." But nowhere is it written that this form of prayer should be used as it is being used by ritualists.

Chapter vii:7-11 contains a precious promise as to prayer. In *chapter viii* the leper, the centurion and His disciples cried to Him and He answered them. (*Verses 2, 6, 13 and 25.*) The cry of the two blind men (*Chapter ix:27*) was likewise answered. *Chapter ix:38* contains His request to pray for the laborers to go into the harvest.

In *chapter xiv:23* we see Him alone on the mountain praying, and in the fourth watch of the night, when He came back and Peter walked on the water to meet Him, sinking Peter cried out, "Lord, save me," and the Lord's hand saved him immediately. The Syro-Phoenician woman cried to Him and persevered in prayer and received her request (*chapter xv:21-28*). From *Chapter xvii:20* we learn that unbelief is the great hindrance in prayer, and that a little faith, as a mustard seed, can accomplish great things. *Matthew xviii:19* is a prayer-promise concerning two who agree to pray for a certain thing.

Chapter xxi:21-22 gives another great assurance as to prayer. The greatest prayer scene in the Word of God took place in Gethsemane. Here we behold the Son of God in deepest agony of soul. Three times our blessed Lord prayed to His Father. With His face on the ground He said, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Then praying again, He said, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." He prayed in the same words the third time. *Chapter xxvi:39-44.* Here is the greatest prayer lesson. The greatest prayer is not to demand of God, but to submit to His Will. "Not my will, but Thy will be done." We are not attempting an exposition of the prayer and the agony of our Lord. The cup undoubtedly was His coming death, when as the willing sacrifice He took the sinner's place, when He who knew no sin, was made sin for us. From this His holy soul shrank. Following His blessed examples innumerable Saints have prayed as He prayed, and in noble submission repeated His prayer, "Thy will be done."

The Gospel of Mark

We omit the passages already quoted in Matthew. *Chapter i*:35 shows our Lord in the very early morning, in a solitary place engaged in prayer. *Chapter vi*:31 contains a command to His disciples to come apart for rest, which must have included prayer. *Chapter vii:6* is a quotation from Isaiah revealing the idle lip worship of Israel. *Chapter xi:22-24* is one of the great prayer promises in the Gospels. This is followed by the exhortation to forgive one another.

The Gospel of Luke

We find interesting additions in Luke's Gospel to the prayer-life of our Lord. From *Chapter iii:21* we learn that at His baptism He was praying. The calling of the twelve Apostles was preceded by prayer on a mountain. *Chapter vi:12.* He was praying when He asked His disciples the question "Whom say the people that I am?" and perchance the answer Peter gave was given as a result of the Lord praying. *Chapter ix:18.* In the same chapter we read that "as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered." The transforming power of prayer was demonstrated upon the holy mountain (*Verse 29*).

Chapter xi:1-13 deals with prayer. In answer to the request of His disciples the Lord gave them the same prayer-form as we find in Matthew. The conclusion "for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever" is omitted in Luke. It is probably an interpolation. The words which follow are great incentives to persevering prayer.

The parable as to prayer in *Chapter xviii:1-8* has a dispensational cast. The widow represents the godly remnant of Israel in the last days, hard pressed by the adversary, and God's gracious interposition in behalf of His elect. It teaches us also that we should always pray and not faint. A second parable is linked with that of the importunate widow, the parable of the Pharisee (representing the Jew) and the Publican (representing the Gentile). The parable teaches that humility, self-abasement, confession of sin, are the true paths of approach to God.

Chapter xxii:31-32 gives the comforting lesson that

not everything depends on our own prayers, but that He, who is our great High-priest, omniscient as He is, offers up effectual prayer in the hour of danger and need for His own. He saw the serpent sneaking up to Peter. Yea, as Satan had asked for the testing of Job, so he asked for the opportunity to sift Peter as wheat. But before he could ever carry out his well-laid plan, the Lord had prayed for Peter and Peter's faith.

To Gethsemane is added the fact that His agony in prayer was so great that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (*Chapter xxii:44*).

Luke only records the prayer of the dying thief in *Chapter xxiii:42*. What faith he displayed! What gracious answer and assurance he received!

The Gospel of John

In the Gospel of John we read but little of the prayer-life of our Lord; nor do we find here the prayer form as given by Matthew and Luke. He mentions prayer only in the part of the fourth Gospel which is nowhere else recorded. When He had His own together (*Chapter xiii*) and gave His farewell discourse, He speaks of prayer "in His Name." It is one of the gracious provisions He has made for His people during His absence from them. The first passage is found in *Chapter xiv:13-14*. It is a blessed assurance to His people that prayer to the Father in His Name will be answered. Yet we must caution against the one-sided use of this promise. Many have pressed the "whatsoever ye shall ask" and found no answer to their

petitions. Other passages make it clear that our asking must be "according to His will." If it is otherwise there can be no answer. If the Lord were to answer our selfish prayers, prayers which have their source in our own will, it would be a disaster. Thus it is written in the Psalms. "He granted their request, but sen leanness in their soul." (*Psalm cvi:15*). The same promise is repeated in *Chapter xv:16*, and here it is conditioned by abiding in Him and bringing forth fruit which remains. Once more in *Chapter xvi:23-24* our Lord speaks of prayer in the same assuring words. He adds, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." It seems as if our Lord with this word sets aside the prayer He had given them previously. The so-called "Lord's Prayer." Up to this time they had used that prayer, but from now on they were to ask in His Name.

Chapter xvii contains the prayer which is truly "The Lord's Prayer." The eleven men gathered about Him saw Him lifting up His eyes to heaven and then heard Him speak to the Father in the beautiful, wonderful and unsearchable words which follow. No Saint of God has ever fathomed the depths of divine love revealed in these petitions. They concern those who belong to Him. The world has no share and part in it. The four great petitions are concerning the salvation, the preservation, the sanctification and the glorification of those given to Him by the Father. It has well been termed, "The high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is the pattern of His priestly intercession in glory.*

*See our complete exposition of "The Gospel of John"

The Books of Acts

The Book of Acts records the beginning of the Church on earth with the day of Pentecost, and how the Gospel message was given in Jerusalem, in all Judea and in Samaria, and then was sent to the Gentiles. Prayer occupies a very prominent place in this historical New Testament book.

The first prayer scene is recorded in *Chapter i:12-14.* The gathered company, in obedience to the Lord's command, waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were together with one accord in prayer and supplication. Among the gathered ones is mentioned Mary, the mother of Jesus. We do not read anything that she offered up special petitions to her Virgin-born Son to make good His promise. It is the last time her name is mentioned in the New Testament. What Romanism teaches as to her special intercession, that sinners need her to approach the Lord Jesus Christ, is a blasphemous invention.

Well meaning, but poorly taught believers, have tried to imitate this prayer-meeting, by setting apart ten days for waiting and prayer for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But this prayer meeting can never be repeated. The promise for which they waited was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. In verse 24 prayer is mentioned again in connection with the choosing of another apostle, who was to take the place of Judas. At the close of *Chapter ii* we read that the three thousand who were added to the one hundred and twenty "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and *in*

prayer." From *Chapter iii:1* we learn that the apostles continued to observe the certain prayer-hours of Judaism. The opening chapters of Acts are still on Jewish ground, and for years to come Jewish believers observed their ancient customs and were even zealous for the law.

Chapter iv:23-30 is the record of the first church prayer meeting. The liberated apostles, Peter and John, came to their own company. After they had received the report they lifted up their voices with one accord. But we do not notice that they used "the prayer-form" the Lord had given to His disciples some three years before. Nor is the use of the "Our Father" mentioned elsewhere in this book, nor is it commanded in the Epistles. The prayer they offered was founded on Scripture and uttered in the Spirit. There was a mighty answer to this prayer (*Verse 31*).

In *Chapter vi:6* prayer is connected with the selection of the seven deacons. In verse five we read that the apostles had decided to give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." Effectual ministry of the Word must be preceded by prayer. Stephen's last prayer is written in *Chapter vii:60*, the Christlike prayer, not to lay this sin to their charge.

Peter and John went down to Samaria, when they heard that the Word was received by them and prayed that they also might receive the Holy Spirit. *Chapter viii:15*. This was necessary inasmuch as Samaria was separate from Jerusalem. In the same chapter wicked Simon Magus asked prayer for himself.

The first prayer of Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the Church, was uttered by him on the road to

Damascus. "Who art Thou Lord?"—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (*Chapter ix:5, 6*). Two significant prayers, for the erstwhile waster of the Church was to learn to know Him in the fullness of His glory, and then become the great, untiring servant, carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles. During the days of Saul's physical blindness he prayed (*Verse 11*). *Verses 10-16* show the blessed intimacy which is possible between the Lord and the individual believer. No one knows anything of the history of this unknown disciple Ananias, yet he talked in a familiar way with the Lord. In a childlike way Ananias told the Lord about the evil report heard of Saul, what he had done to the Saints, as if the Lord did not know all about it. Such communion is within the reach of every child of God still. The same chapter (*verse 40*) records Peter's prayer for Tabitha, who had died, and his prayer was answered by her resurrection.

In the beginning of *Chapter x* we read of Cornelius, the centurion, who had turned to God from idols and who prayed to God alway. His prayers were answered also, though he was ignorant of God's way of salvation.

In *Chapter xii* another prayer meeting is mentioned. Peter was in prison. In the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, a continuous prayer meeting was held that night; "many were gathered together praying." (*Verse 12.*) Their prayers for beloved Peter were answered, for the Lord delivered him by angelic ministry. He knocked, after his miraculous release from prison, at the door of the prayer-room. Rhoda, the maid, recognized his voice, but for joy forgot to open the gate. She believed and knew it

was Peter and prayer had been answered. When she announced the good news to the praying company, they did not think that prayer had been answered, but charged the damsel with madness, and when she persisted in her claim, that Peter was at the door, they thought it might be "his angel," his disembodied spirit.

The next chapter, *Chapter xiii*, opens with a notable prayer scene. A number of servants of the Lord were together, ministering unto the Lord and fasting. Ministering unto the Lord means unquestionably communion with Him. Then the Holy Spirit spoke and asked for the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul. They were chosen as messengers to the Gentile world. The first great missionary movement of the Church was born in prayer, as every other successful missionary effort began and continued in prayer. Then followed more prayer (*xiii:3*).

Once more prayer is mentioned in the first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul. They ordained elders in every church, prayed with them with fasting, and commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. *Chapter xiv:23.* Though nothing is said about prayer in the chapters which follow it is a foregone conclusion that prayer was made every step of the way.

Several times in tracing prayer in the Old Testament we have called attention to the disaster of prayerlessness. In *Chapter xv:36-41* we have a striking lesson of the neglect of prayer. Paul suggested to Barnabas to start on another journey. He said "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do."

This was a noble purpose. But was it according to the will of the Lord? Were they not Evangelizers called to carry the Gospel into the regions beyond? While in the beginning of the first journey there was prayer, not a word is said about Paul and Barnabas waiting on the Lord and ministering unto Him. The result was deplorable. Paul and Barnabas became separated.

In the second journey Paul and Silas, his new companion, went in Philippi to the place where prayer was wont to be made. It was at a riverside. There they met a proselyte, Lydia, the seller of purple of Thyatira. The Lord opened her heart and she accepted the Gospel and was baptized. Then as a result of the deliverance of the demon possessed girl, Paul and Silas were beaten with many stripes, were cast into a deep dungeon and their feet painfully fastened in the stocks. Moans and curses were the regular order in Roman prisons, but that night the two messengers of the Lord prayed and sang praises unto God. The other prisoners heard the two strange voices calling on God and praising Him for their sufferings. The God of heaven, who saw and heard all, answered with an earthquake, and the conversion of the jailor followed. *Chapter xvi: 13-34.*

The last journey of Paul to Jerusalem, which ended with his imprisonment, we have traced in our exposition of the Book of Acts. Prayer was connected with that journey, though the Apostle went forward in spite of the many warnings given by the Holy Spirit through different disciples. At Miletus he knelt down and prayed with the elders of Ephesus, *Chapter xx:36,*

and at Tyre, on the seashore they all knelt down and prayed. But there was no prayer when he reached Jerusalem, when it was suggested to him to take the four men who had taken a Jewish vow upon themselves and to purify himself in the ceremony. It was an inconsistent action. Nor do we read anything about prayer in connection with his arrest, though in relating his great experience he recalled the fact that at a former visit to Jerusalem, while he prayed in the temple, he was in a trance, and the Lord had spoken to him and given him commission to carry the Gospel far hence to the Gentiles. But in the night he was in the castle (*Chapter xxiii:10-11*); he must have called on the Lord, for He appeared to him and comforted His servant, assuring him that he was also to bear witness concerning Himself in Rome.

The last mention of prayer in this book is found in *Chapter xxviii:8*, when he prayed for the healing of the father of Publius who was sick; he was healed in answer to prayer.

PRAYER IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES

These epistles reveal the fact that Paul was a great believer in, and a great man of prayer. He craved the intercession of God's people, and many times he prayed for them with thanksgiving.

In *The Epistle to the Romans* prayer is mentioned by him five times. In *Chapter i:9-10* he assures the believers in Rome that "without ceasing" he made mention of them always in his prayers. His special request was that he might have a prosperous journey to come to them, if it were the will of God. This ought to be added to *every* prayer request. *Chapter viii:26-27* gives the blessed assurance that the Spirit of God helps our infirmities in prayer. We do not know what we should pray for as we ought. Then when we realize our helplessness on our knees, unable to express ourselves in His presence, "the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. The intercession of the third person of the Trinity according to the will of God is a deep and comforting truth.

Then the great apostle was an earnest lover of his own people, the Jews. He prayed for Israel; it was his heart's desire that they might be saved. *Chapter x:1.* It was this great love which led him to visit Jerusalem again.

In the portion of the epistle which contains practical exhortations he writes, "Continuing instant in prayer." *Chapter xii:12.* Then in *Chapter xv:30-32* he requests prayer for himself. Three petitions are contained in his request. (1) For deliverance from the

unbelieving Jews; (2) for his coming service in Jerusalem; (3) that he might come to them in Rome with joy. Here again the will of God is made prominent.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians

Prayer and thanksgiving is mentioned by the apostle in his salutation in this epistle. *Chapter i:2-5.* Inasmuch as this epistle is written to correct and expose certain evils in the Corinthian assembly but little mention of prayer is made. In *Chapter vii:5* fasting and prayer are suggested. In *Chapter xi:4-5* the command is given that the praying man should have his head uncovered, while the woman's head is to be covered, as an evidence of being under authority. (*Eph. v:25*) Prayer in an unknown tongue and praying with the Spirit and understanding are contrasted in *Chapter xiv:14-15.*

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

In *Chapter i:11* Paul speaks of the Corinthians as being helpers together by prayer for himself. Prayer one for another is touched upon in *Chapter ix:14.* One of the most instructive passages on prayer in the Pauline epistles is found in *Chapter xii:7-10.* The context speaks of the remarkable revelation which he had at a certain time. He was caught up into the third heaven. It must have occurred while he was engaged in prayer. Then he speaks of the thorn in the flesh, which was given to him, even the messenger of Satan buffeting him. It is the generally accepted view that this thorn was a physical affliction. Thrice he besought the Lord that it might be taken away. Finally

the answer came. It was not deliverance such as he sought, but the gracious assurance from His Lord, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Then he stopped praying for the removal of the thorn in the flesh and rather gloried in his weakness and infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. *Chapter xiii:7* records his final prayer for the Corinthians.

We find nothing about prayer in the epistle to the *Galatians*. It is different in the great epistle to the *Ephesians*. Two prayers are given in full which the apostle prayed, or rather which the Holy Spirit prayed through the apostle, for the believers in Ephesus and for all God's people. The first prayer in *Chapter i:15-23* is addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. The three great petitions are (1) that the heart-eyes of the saints of God being enlightened, they might know the hope of God's calling; (2) that they might know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints and, (3) that they might know the exceeding greatness of His power which is towards them who believe.*

The second prayer is at the close of the *third chapter, verses 14-21*. It is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Its great petition is for the heart apprehension of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and it closes with a great doxology.

The third passage in this epistle in which Paul speaks of prayer is in *Chapter vi:18-19*. It is one of the great weapons of the armor of God, prayer. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and

*"The Masterpiece of God" by A. C. G. explains these prayers

watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Then the man of God, knowing the great and all important value of prayer, requested prayer for himself.

The Epistle to the Philippians

This beautiful little Epistle written from the Roman prison to the beloved Philippians breathes the spirit of prayer, of love and joy throughout. In his greetings the apostle says, "I thank God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." (*Chapter i:3-4.*) He could not write thus to the worldly Corinthian church; nor to the churches in Galatia, for they were falling from grace and were going back to the law. Another prayer is found in the same chapter, *verses 9-11.* In verse 19 he mentions the prayers of the Philippians for him, the prisoner of the Lord. Most precious are his words in *Chapter iv:6.* Instead of reading, "being careful for nothing" we should read, "be anxious for nothing." The true cure for all anxiety and care is prayer. "In *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." And to this we add the assurance, so stimulating to faith, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (*Verse 19.*)

The Epistle to the Colossians

Here also we find a full prayer of the Apostle Paul, in *Chapter i:9-14.* The great petition in this prayer is that the saints of God might have the knowledge

of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The will of God in this passage is that which God has willed before the foundation of the world for those who believe on His Son, and who accept Him as their Saviour-Lord. The knowledge of the eternal salvation will of God the Colossians lacked, and on this account they were listening to philosophy and words of vain deceit and were in danger of giving up Christ and His fulness. If the will of God is known, if believers realize what the grace of God has put on their side in Christ Jesus, the things which follow in this prayer of Colossians will be manifested in the lives of God's people. In *Chapter iv:2* the apostle exhorts, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

The Colossian assembly had in their midst a servant who was a mighty man of prayer. Of him we read in *Chapter iv:12-13*. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis." The literal translation is "he agonized in prayer." Laodicea is mentioned. Probably that church had even then the character of lukewarmness which is revealed in the last book of the Bible. We do not read anything of criticism made by Epaphras. His ministry was agonizing prayer for the declining spirituality of the churches in Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis. We need such men today who agonize in prayer.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

This is the first epistle written by the inspired pen of Paul. In *Chapter i:2-3* he assures them of his gratitude to God for them, that he makes mention of them in prayer and that he remembers without ceasing their work of faith, their labor of love and patience of hope. Again in *Chapter ii:13* he speaks of thanking God for them. In *Chapter iii:9-13* he assures them that he prays night and day for them. He was anxious to see their faces, and then perfect that which was lacking in their faith. The last three verses of this chapter contain his prayer for them. There are three petitions. (1) That God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ might direct his way to them; (2) that there might be an increase in abounding love; (3) that they might be unblameable in holiness before God, the Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His Saints.

"Pray without ceasing" is the exhortation in *Chapter v:17* and before he closed the epistle he wrote, "Brethren pray for us" *Chapter v:25*.

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians

We find a prayer at the close of the first chapter. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." *Chapter i:11-12*. A similar prayer for them is found at the close of the second chapter.

In the beginning of the third chapter Paul writes: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith."

The First Epistle to Timothy

In *Chapter ii:1-4* we find an important instruction given by the aged Paul to his son Timothy. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks are to be made for all men. Then kings and those who are in authority are especially mentioned. We should remember when this was written there were no Christian kings or authorities. They were pagans. Such prayers are good and acceptable in the sight of God. In public prayers this divine command should be strictly followed.

In the **Second Epistle to Timothy,** prayer is mentioned only once, in *Chapter i:3.* "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers day and night."

Prayer is not mentioned in **The Epistle to Titus,** but in the letter to **Philemon** Paul writes, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers" (*Verse 3*).

The **Epistle to the Hebrews** unfolds the priesthood of Christ. He is revealed as the great intercessor for His people, who appears in the presence of God for us, and is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them. This fact of His presence in

the highest heaven gives boldness to the prayer of faith. *Chapter iv:14-16.* "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The word "boldness" means "to speak all." Our boldness to come to the throne of grace with all, our sins and our burdens as well, is in the blood of Jesus. *Chapter x:19-22*, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Then the apostle exhorts, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (*Verse 35*).

The eleventh chapter brings before us the great cloud of witnesses, the men and the women of faith and trust in God. The heroes of faith, as we call them, were men and women of prayer. Only a few of these are mentioned by name. What a record do we find in *verses 32-38!* It has well been said the chapter is incomplete. We must think of the martyrs and faithful witnesses of the Christian era. The uncountable host of men, women and children who were persecuted, cruelly tortured and martyred under pagan Rome, and

the great mass of people who were tortured, cast into prisons and murdered by papal Rome, and many others belong to this chapter. Prayer was their refuge and through trust in God they conquered.

Some have questioned the Pauline authorship of this epistle. The close of the epistle establishes it in a simple way. The writer says: "Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" *Chapter xiii:18*. He also sends greetings from Italy (*verse 24*) and states that the Hebrews had compassion for him in his bonds (*Chapter x:34*). The writer was a prisoner in Rome, and as Paul always did request prayer for himself and those who were with him, so he does here.

PRAYER IN THE GENERAL EPISTLES

The Epistle of James

This is the earliest of all the epistles, probably written about the year 45 A.D. In *Chapter i:5* James directs the attention of those to whom he wrote the epistle (the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad) to prayer. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Another encouraging word is found in *Chapter iv:8*. "Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh to you." Much is said about prayer by James in the last chapter of his epistle.

In *Verses 13-15* we find an exhortation to prayer. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." We do not enter into the question of faith-healing, which uses this passage to confirm this view. We refer our readers to our book on "The Healing Question" in which we explain this passage fully. The believer in affliction is to seek the face of the Lord, as well as in sickness. But this does not mean that God-given means should be rejected.

In *Verses 16-18* Elijah is mentioned as the great man of prayer, whose prayer closed and opened the heavens. And he was "a man subject to like passions as we are."

The First Epistle of Peter

The Christians, Jewish believers, to whom Peter wrote were passing through severe trials, and he exhorts them to steadfastness and trust in the Lord.

In *Chapter ii:5* he speaks of the holy priesthood which believers possess in the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives the lie to the system which claims to have been instituted by himself (Romanism) and which denies the universal priesthood of all true children of God. The functions of our holy priesthood consist in offering up spiritual sacrifices, prayer and praise, and in the prayer of intercession.

In *Chapter iii:12* the apostle quotes an Old Testament prayer passage. The final passage in this epistle is the beloved exhortation in *Chapter v:7*, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." How precious to faith! In *Psalm lv:2* a similar promise is given. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

The **Second Epistle of Peter** contains no reference to prayer.

The Epistle of John

Three times John writes of prayer. The first time in *Chapter iii:21-22*. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that

are pleasing in His sight." Prayer is here linked with obedience and a righteous life.

Chapter v:14-15. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him." Effectual prayer must be "according to His will."

Verse 16 mentions prayer in another setting. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

What is the sin unto death? Some think it is the unpardonable sin of which our Lord speaks, the sin against the Holy Spirit. But this is erroneous. The death here is physical death. God in His mercy may cut off a believer, who continues in certain sins, and remove him by death from this earthly scene. This seems to have been the case with some of the Corinthians. See *1 Cor. xi:30-32.*

In the **Epistle of Jude** prayer is mentioned in *Verse 20.* "*Praying in the Holy Spirit.*" It is well known that this little epistle gives a picture prophetically of the last days of Christendom, the days of Apostasy. The exhortation to prayer is not to pray "for the Holy Spirit," for another outpouring of His Spirit, nor to the Spirit, but to pray *in* the Spirit. The prayer for another day of Pentecost is unauthorized by Scripture.

PRAYER IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

This capstone of the Bible, our great New Testament Book of Prophecy, makes several references to prayer. Significantly prayer is only touched upon in this book in connection with heaven. We read first in *Chapter v:8.* "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints." The living creatures are the Cherubim; the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed in glory. Their prayers as a sweet odor are remembered in heaven.

Chapter viii:3. "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." This angel represents the Lord Jesus Christ. The much incense represents His own intercession; the prayers of the saints are thus mingled with His own. Then in the next verse we read: "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands."

But we must not overlook the last prayer of the whole Bible. *Chapter xxii:20.* The Lord Jesus Christ speaks His last word in this verse, "Surely I come quickly." There is an answer from the earth, "Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus." This is the prayer which the saints of God may pray in the Spirit. It has been the forgotten prayer. In our own days it has been recovered, because the midnight cry is heard, and the bride with the Spirit says, Come.

THE SECOND PART

PRAYER AND ITS LESSONS ACCORDING TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

In our Scripture investigation, as given in the first part of this volume, we have learned of the prominence of prayer in every portion of the Word of God. From Genesis to Revelation this great exercise of the human soul is found everywhere. Men and women, kings and peasants, priests and prophets, sinners and saints, rich and poor, the learned and the unlearned called upon the name of the Lord and He heard and answered their cry. From this dark earth of sin, suffering, affliction, sorrow and tears, there has ascended for well-nigh six thousand years, that which is music in the ears of God, the sinner's cry for mercy, the worship and praise of the saint of God, the child-like trust in Him. It will continue so from generation to generation, till the time comes when "the day dawns and the shadows flee away," when finally all tears will be wiped away, when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying and no more pain." That there are mysteries in connection with prayer we have stated before. We cannot solve them. But the day will come also when all will be made clear, the day in which "we shall know as we are known." It remains now for us to point out the prayer lessons as revealed in both Testaments.

1. Prayer Started in the Very Beginning of the Race (*Gen. iv:26*). Evolution denies this fact. Evolution teaches not only a physical development of man

from lower forms of life, it also teaches a development of soulical and spiritual faculties. Gradually man developed these faculties, acquiring a conscience and a moral nature. It is said that man began as a worshipper of inanimate objects, such as stones, pieces of wood, trees, etc., as is still done by primitive races, the so-called Fetish worship. Then in process of time, as he developed mentally other forms of worship were adopted. They began to worship the sun, the moon, the stars, certain animals, even the serpent became an object of adoration, as is still done in our own country among the Hopi Indians of Arizona. Then in this development monotheism, the belief in one unseen Being, was reached. Modernism teaches that much of the religion of Israel originated in the worship of ancient Babylon, and that Jehovah was only an assumed tribal god and not the Creator of heaven and earth. Christianity is taken to be only a link in this chain of religious progress. Modernism is bold enough to claim that Christianity is not the final form of religion. It attempts to strip it of its supernatural character and produce a better, a more suitable religion. In all this prayer is involved.

The statements of divine revelation in the Bible silence these miserable inventions. The fourth chapter of Genesis, brief in its record, shows that man started as the worshipper of God, calling on His name and seeking His face. The first man and woman were creatures of intelligence. The body of man was called into existence by a creative act of God (*Gen. i:26*). From the very beginning he had soul and spirit, which enabled him to be in fellowship and communion with his

Creator-God. Man fell and became a sinner, but this does not exclude the possibility of returning to Him, seeking His face, and redemption. That redemption was announced on the very scene of man's fall (*Gen. iii:15*). Adam and Eve, who had known fellowship with God, who heard Him speak, listening to His words, and who were driven out of Eden, after the gracious action of Jehovah-God in covering their nakedness with coats of skin, one of the first hints of the sacrificial work of Christ; must have instructed their offspring. They probably kept near their erstwhile habitation. They may have spoken to their children of the pleasures of Eden and pointed to the Cherubim with the whirling, flaming sword. No doubt they instructed Cain and Abel in the necessity of bringing an offering unto the Lord, and the nature of that offering. That prayer was connected with all this is an indisputable fact. One, Cain, believed not; but Abel "by faith offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (*Heb. xi:4*). There must have been confession of sin, humiliation, and the prayer for mercy. In the place of Abel, murdered by his own brother, God put Seth, from whom sprang the God-fearing generations named in the fifth chapter of Genesis. With Seth's son, Enos, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. It may have been "calling upon His name" in a public way.

2. **Prayer the Expression of Human Dependence.** This is the teaching of the Scriptures. We cannot possibly quote the many instances recorded in both Testa-

ments where this is fully illustrated. In distress, man, knowing that he needs help from a higher source, turns to God by calling upon Him. His people who know Him as a merciful God, who has promised to hear the cry of His children, use prayer continually, living the life of faith and trust, knowing that they must depend on Him in all things. This life of dependence, seeking His help and guidance, turning to Him at all times, always confident that He hears and answers prayer, is what God loves. David received the honoured title, "the man after God's own heart" on account of his confidence in Him.

3. **God Invites and Encourages Prayer.** It is the means of establishing communion with man. The hundreds of promises in the Word of God are the challenge to faith and prayer. The numerous exhortations to call upon the Lord, to draw nigh unto Him, to seek Him, to put our trust in Him, to commit our way unto Him, and cry unto Him in the time of trouble are encouragements to prayer. To ignore these promises and calls to trust Him is unbelief. To heed these encouragements to prayer and believe the promises is faith. A God-pleasing life is therefore a life of trust and prayer.

4. **Prayer and the Word of God.** Both are inseparably connected. In the Word of God, the Lord speaks to our hearts; in prayer we speak to Him. In many prayer passages quoted before we saw that the Lord spoke first, after which the one who heard the Word of the Lord spoke to Him in prayer. See for an example, *Jeremiah i:4-6.* We also remind again of Daniel's great prayer. We see him in the first year

of the reign of Darius reading the Word of God. He had in his hand the prophecy of Jeremiah, in which the Lord had promised that the desolation of Jerusalem should last seventy years. After reading this prophetic promise the prophet turned to the Lord. The reading of the Word of God led to prayer.

The German Theologian Bengel, author of the Gnomen of the New Testament, had the reputation of being a great man of prayer, in possession of the secret of effectual prayer. One day a fellow believer watched him at the close of the day. He saw the old saint sitting before a large Bible, reading slowly. Often he stopped, meditated and silent tears ran down his cheeks. After reading and meditating a long time, he closed the book and began to speak to Him, who had spoken through His Word to his heart. The believer who neglects the daily reading of the Word of God and meditation on it, soon also neglects prayer; but the believer who listens to what the Lord says in His Word, is diligent in searching the Scriptures, will also pray earnestly and effectually.

5. The Prayer of Confession and Humiliation. This is especially acceptable with God, for in doing this man takes the proper place in the presence of a holy and righteous God. Job's one sentence, "Behold I am vile," was of greater value in the eyes of God than all his previous words and the answers of his three friends. Isaiah's "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips" delighted the heart of God. Solomon's confession, "I am but a little child; and I know not how to go out or come in" pleased the Lord so that He gave Solomon much more

than an understanding heart. The publican who smote his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (literally, make atonement for me), went down to his house justified, while the self-righteous Pharisee remained afar from God. "For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*Luke xviii:13-14*). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And again it is written, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (*James iv:6, 10*).

The highest place the believer can take in the presence of the Lord is on his face, in the dust. Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and many others in the Scriptures prayed the prayers of confession of sin and humbled themselves in the sight of God. Peter fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (*Luke v:8*). It brought forth from the gracious lips of our Lord, "Fear not!" No finite mind knows how ready God is to listen to the prayer of confession and humiliation. We take the case of David for an illustration. He had plunged into horrible sin. He tried to hide it. But God sent Nathan to him with a heart stirring message. When David said, "I have sinned against the Lord" the prophet answered, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." In the *Thirty-second Psalm* he relates his experience "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions

unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." The *Fifty-first Psalm* is the outstanding penitential Psalm of confession, repentance and self-judgment. Here "the man after God's own heart" brings his sin into the light of God. As children of God we too should read this Psalm with the blessed promise before our hearts, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

6. Intercessory Prayer. The prayer of intercession is a most prominent feature in both Testaments. It is oftener mentioned than the prayer for help in time of distress and trouble. Noah was the preacher of righteousness; no doubt he too was a man of prayer and an intercessor for the ungodly of the closing age, before the judgment by water overtook the earth. Abraham, the father of the faithful, interceded in the presence of the Lord for Sodom and Gomorrah. He also prayed for Abimelech. Still greater in intercession was Moses. He interceded for Egypt and Pharaoh, and the Lord answered his pleadings. Then he interceded for Israel. The first great prayer of intercession we found in Exodus *Chapter xxxii:10-14*, in connection with the worship of the golden calf. Again he prayed an intercessory prayer in which he offered to have his own name blotted out of God's book. His intercession quenched the fire at Taberah (*Num. xi:2*). When his sister Miriam was smitten with leprosy he interceded for her and the Lord answered; his greatest intercessory prayer is recorded, as we have seen, in *Numbers xiv:13-19*. He also prayed for the people when the fiery serpents were doing their awful work. Joshua prayed the prayer

of intercession. Samuel gathered the people at Mizpeh to pray the prayer of intercession in their behalf; and the Lord heard him (*1 Sam. vii:5, 8, 9-10*). He considered it a sin not to intercede for God's chosen people (*1 Sam. xii:23*). Elijah and Elisha prayed for others and were heard. Isaiah interceded for Judah and Judah's king in the Assyrian crisis, and deliverance was sent. He also prayed for Hezekiah when he was sick unto death. Then we have the examples of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Nor must we forget Job, who was told to pray for his three friends; blessing followed as he did so. Habakkuk was a great man of prayer, who interceded for the nation. Ezra and Nehemiah were likewise men given to the prayer of intercession.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest of all intercessors. The mighty men of God like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Daniel and others foreshadowed His great ministry of intercession. The high-priest carrying the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon the breastplate and upon the shoulder stones into the presence of the Lord was a type of the true and better high-priest. Inasmuch as another paragraph is devoted to the high-priestly intercession of Christ, in behalf of His people, and its relation to our prayers we do not enlarge upon this here.

Next to the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe the Apostle Paul was the greatest intercessor. In nearly every one of his epistles he assures those to whom they were addressed that he made mention of them in his prayers, and at the same time he requested the prayer of intercession for himself. Epaphras, a servant

of Christ, among the Colossians, was given much to the prayer of intercession. How much needed today is the prayer of intercession! May every Christian reader practice this form of prayer increasingly.

7. The Conditions of Effectual Prayer. Faith is the first condition. James writes, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord" (*i:6, 7*). Many times our Lord mentioned this condition. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*" (*Mark xi:22-24*). See also *Matthew xxi:21-22*. To those who approached Him our Lord said, "Go in peace; thy faith has made thee whole"; or "according to your faith be it unto you"; again "when he saw their faith" * * * "thy faith hath saved thee." The apostles therefore prayed "Increase our faith." The father of the afflicted child cried out, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." But this faith is not only a firm belief that He is able to do that which we ask, trust and confidence in His power, as well as in His willingness to hear our prayers, but true faith includes submission in confidence to His will.

Effectual prayer must be according to His will,

"Not my will but Thy will be done," should always be added to every prayer. Some claim that this is not true faith, that the believer should demand. But such a demand is not faith but presumption. We have seen that in the Gospel of John our Lord gave unconditional promises of prayer to His disciples. He did not even mention faith. *Chapter xiv:13-14; xvi:24.* In the first epistle of John we find a prayer condition. "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that, if we ask anything *according to His will*, He heareth us" (*1 John v:14*). As we have seen, the apostle Paul frequently mentioned the will of God in connection with prayer.

In the same epistle we find another condition of effectual prayer. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight" (*1 John iii:22*). James writes, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (*James v:16*). "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry" (*Psalm xxxiv:15*). This is quoted by Peter in his first epistle, *Chapter iii:12.* "The righteous is delivered out of trouble" (*Prov. xi:8*). Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are righteous. But righteousness in life and obedience are necessary for effectual prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (*Psalm lxvi:18*). It is therefore necessary that the believer search his heart and bring failure and sin into God's light, confess and judge it. It is through the Spirit of God that we can do this, and as He speaks through the Word, and we are cleansed by the Word (*Eph. v:26*); the reading of His Word, as already stated, must precede prayer.

Our Lord speaks of prayer "in His Name." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." * * * "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." The prayer therefore which is made without His Name is unheard and remains unanswered. But prayer "in His Name" means more than the use of His Name in a formal way. It means that we realize our position, our oneness, our identification with Him; that He is in us and we are in Him. "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (*John xv:7*).

Needless to say, the Scriptures do not teach prayer in any other name. Prayers addressed to God in the name of the Virgin Mary, Joseph, in the name of the Apostles, or different saints, generally man-made, are not only unscriptural, but they are an abomination in the sight of God; for they detract from the glory of His ever blessed Son.

8. The Intercession of Christ. In His great prayer our Lord assures us of His intercessory prayer. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world" (*John xvii:9*). In the epistle to the Hebrews this great ministry of our high-priest is fully revealed. His priestly ministry is not concerning our sins; He deals with the sins of believers as the Advocate, the Paraclete with the Father. He made reconciliation for the sins of His people when He died for our sins on the cross. "Because He Himself suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (*Heb. ii:18*). His priestly intercession concerns therefore our trials, our sorrows, our afflictions and our temptations. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for He too

in His earthly life was tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin. From sin He could not be tempted, for He had no sin, no fallen, corrupt nature as we have it (*Heb. iv:15*). We have mentioned before His intercession for Peter when Satan intended to sift him as wheat. It illustrates His never-ceasing ministry in glory. What He did for Peter He does for every member of His body. He knows, He sees and He hears our groans, our tears, our hardships, our heartaches, our disappointments and all our sorrows. He prays up yonder for us and intercedes in our behalf. As our high-priest, He sustains us, appearing in the presence of God for us; as our Advocate He restores when we have sinned.

The fact of the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ has a definite and most comforting relation to our own prayers. Many Christians think that all depends on their prayers, but they forget that another One is also praying. While our own prayers often remain unanswered, His prayers for us are always answered, for it is written, "Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of His lips" (*Psalm xxi:2*). Sometimes our prayers remain unanswered. Oftentimes the very opposite comes into our lives than what we requested in prayer. We ought to think then of His prayers for us, and accept our disappointment as "His appointment," that He knows what is best for us. So let us look beyond our imperfect prayer requests and think of Him, whose prayers for us are perfect prayers and who never leaves nor forsakes.

9. The Holy Spirit and Prayer. True prayer and

worship must be in the Spirit. The indwelling Spirit is the power of acceptable prayer and worship by the child of God. As we saw from *Romans viii:26, 27*, the Spirit helps our infirmities. While we know how to pray, we often do not know what to pray for. Perplexity as to what to ask is often troubling the believer. The question "What shall I do? what shall I pray?" trembles upon the lips of the child of God. It is then that the Spirit maketh intercession for us according to the will of God.

10. Answered Prayer. The great majority of the prayers recorded in the Word of God were answered. Only a few remained unanswered. All the answered prayers, as may be demonstrated by a closer study, were answered because they were offered up in communion with the Lord, were prayed in trusting the Lord and were according to His will. This record is encouraging to the praying believer to expect prayer answers. We have heard Christians say, "Is it not wonderful, I prayed and my prayer was answered?" We should always expect an answer to our prayers and not be surprised when the answer comes. Unanswered prayer should lead to heart-searching, humiliation and continuance in prayer. Some have waited on the Lord with certain petitions for years, till finally their prayers were graciously answered.

11. Prayers in Great Distress and in Sickness. Many such are found throughout the Scriptures. A German proverb says, "*Wenn die Not am Groessten, ist Gott am Naechsten*," When the need is the greatest, God is nearest. Israel's history demonstrated this fact, for many centuries. In what distress they were at the

Red Sea. It was a despairing condition. But Moses said "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Then he cried unto the Lord and He answered by making a way through the deep waters of the sea. And under the Judges when the distress was great, because Israel had sinned, God heard their cry in their distress. The Assyrian invasion is another illustration. The destruction of Jerusalem seemed to be imminent. Rabshakeh had uttered his vile words in the presence of the people and sent an insulting letter. But God in answer to prayer saved Jerusalem. David had this experience many times, that the Lord hears and answers prayer when distress is great. "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God, and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears" (*2 Sam. xxii:7*). "I called upon the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me into a large place" (*Psalm cxviii:5*).

The *107th Psalm* is a review of Israel's past history up to the time of their final deliverance and restoration. We read of them as wanderers in the wilderness. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses" (*Verse 6*). They were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, because they rebelled against the words of the Lord, and condemned the counsel of the Most High. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses" (*Verse 13*). They had become fools on account of their transgressions and neared the gates of death. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses" (*Verse 19*). Storm and disaster sur-

rounded them on all sides. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He bringeth them out of their distresses."

What a blessed confirmation of that star promise, "Call upon Me in the time of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me" (*Psalm l:15*). Thousands upon thousands of God's people in every generation have called upon Him in their troubles and He answered the cry of distress. And thousands upon thousands at all times have joined in the inspired praise, when prayer in distress was answered, "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call on Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of sheol gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord I beseech Thee, deliver my soul. * * * Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears and my feet from falling" (*Psalm cxvi*). We, too, can say with the remnant of Israel, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavillion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a rock" (*Psalm xxvii:5*). Then comes His gracious word to the trusting believer, "He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him" (*Psalm xci:15*). All these blessed words, and many more which we cannot quote, show that the Lord is indeed the nearest when His children are in distress and sorrow; He is ready and willing to answer the cry of the heart.

And so it is in sickness. As we have shown in our book on "The Healing Question," God often answers prayer in sickness and the sick are raised up in answer to prayer. But in many other cases, as it was with Paul's thorn in the flesh, deliverance is withheld, and the only answer which came was the assurance of the sufficiency of grace.

Abraham prayed to God for Abimelech and his wife, and both were healed. Moses prayed for the healing of his sister, and she was healed. The unnamed prophet in *1 Kings xiii:6* prayed for the restoration of the king's hand, and he was healed. Hezekiah was raised up in answer to prayer and fifteen years were added to his life. We cannot mention the many cases of healing in answer to prayer addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ when He was on earth, nor the answered prayers for healing in the book of Acts. They are all tabulated in our "Healing Question." The Word of God encourages the child of God to go to the Lord first of all in time of physical ills.

12. Prayers for Guidance. The promises of God include guidance. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (*Psalm xxv:9*. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye" (*Psalm xxxii:8*). "For Thy Name's sake lead and guide me" (*Psalm xxxi:3*). "The Lord shall guide thee continually" (*Isaiah lviii:11*). Asaph, Israel's sweet singer, wrote, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (*Psalm lxxiii:24*). "He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

And He led them on safely, so that they feared not" (*Psalm lxxviii:52*). Besides these passages there are many more which tell of His willingness to lead His people, to show them the way in which they are to go. How well David made use of these gracious offers. He enquired often of the Lord when he did not know which way to turn. See *2 Sam. v:19* and *23*. Many of the Psalms in which he prays for guidance and direction were written when he suffered under the persecution of Saul. Prayer for guidance is our great privilege as the children of God.

13. Victory Through Prayer. Our faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Prayer is the means to gain this victory. The victorious life is a prayerful life. The less prayer the more defeat. Israel's history is left to us for our learning. We remind the reader of several Old Testament passages, which illustrate victory through prayer. When the sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab, they gained a great victory, because "they cried to God in the battle, and He was intreated of them, because they put their trust in Him" (*1 Chron. v:18-20*). When Zerah the Ethiopian came with an host of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots against Asa, Asa prayed this prayer: "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord Thou art our God, let not man prevail against Thee" (*2 Chron. xiv:9-11*). God answered and gave victory. Still greater was the

victory which Jehoshaphat obtained through prayer. Moab and Ammon tried to crush the pious, God-fearing king of Judah. He sought the Lord and ordered a fast. He offered up prayer. We quote one verse from this prayer. "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee" (*2 Chron. xx:3-13*. A glorious victory followed. But note in the quoted verse the two essential features to obtain victory through divine power. The acknowledgment of helplessness is the first; looking to the Lord for victory is the second. This holds good in all the conflicts the believer has. We must learn yet more and more the lessons of our own weakness and helplessness, that we have no strength, and then cast ourselves upon Him, who has gained the victory for us, and who can make us more than conquerors.

Here we also mention Israel's battle with Amalek (*Ex. xvii*). Amalek, the never-ceasing foe of Israel, typical of the flesh and the world, engaged Israel in battle. On the mountain was seen a figure with uplifted arms to heaven. It was Moses, the man of God, the great intercessor. When his arms were uplifted, and the battling Israelites beheld their leader in this attitude, they gained the victory. Blessed picture of Him who ever liveth and intercedeth for us! Victory is looking to Him, trusting on Him and calling on His Name in the conflict.

14. Prayer and Satan. There is a kingdom of darkness out of which the true believer has been delivered (*Col. i:13*). It is an organized kingdom, for

Scripture speaks of principalities and powers which are there. Its seat is the air, for the head of that kingdom is called the "prince of the power of the air" (*Eph. ii:2; iii:10*). Satan, the fallen angels and the demons are all in opposition to God and to the people of God. The great conflict began when man fell and it still continues, nor will it end till the great victor appears again and crushes the serpent's head. If Satan hates anything besides the Lord Jesus Christ, it surely must be prayer. He knows from age-long experience that prayer "changeth things," and moves the hand of God in behalf of His people. To describe his various activities and his defeat through prayer and trust in God would require another volume like this.

The trail of the serpent is marked throughout sacred history. He stood behind the enemies of Israel which attacked them, knowing that out of their midst would come He who would strip him of his power and end his reign. He was the instigator of David's sin and later, to hurt God's people, he moved David to number Israel. He inspired the false prophets and prophetesses of Israel to give a lying message. Through demons he possessed, and still does so, the bodies and souls of men and women. Even a daughter of Abraham, as we read in the Gospels, he had bound for eighteen years. He is seen as the hindering power in the book of Acts, using certain instruments to hinder the progress of the Gospel, as Simon Magus, Elymas, the sorcerer, the damsel in Philippi and others. The Apostle wrote of the open doors and added, "there are many adversaries." Prayer and trust in the Lord defeated him. And thus he continues in our age.

The Apostle writes: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the wicked spirits in the heavenly places" (*Eph. vi:12*). But God has provided "the whole armour of God," that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We have the shield of faith by which we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Prayer belongs to our armour in this conflict, for we read, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (*Eph. vi:18*).

From *Daniel x* we learn what power Satan has to hinder even a message sent from the throne of God in answer to prayer. Every true believer, whose aim is to walk in the Spirit, knows how he hinders in prayer. The weapon we can wield against him is prayer, praying always at all times.

15. The Disaster of Prayerlessness. This disaster is very marked in the Holy Scriptures. Prayer is not mentioned in the life of the friend of God when he left the place to which the Lord had brought him, and went down to Egypt. Nor did he commune with the Lord when he followed the advice of his wife and took Hagar to produce the promised seed. Prayerlessness led to disaster in the life of Jacob and in the life of some of his sons. Even Moses erred through not asking counsel from the Lord. A disaster came upon Israel under Joshua. The Gibeonites came with their old shoes and garments and their mouldy bread. Neither Joshua nor the elders asked counsel of the

Lord. "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel of the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live, and the princes of the congregation sware unto them" (*Joshua ix:3-15*). They became a disturbing element among the people of God. Saul, the son of Kish, the first king of Israel, was not a man of prayer. His prayerlessness led to the tragedy of his life. He finally did no longer seek the counsel of the Lord and went to the witch of Endor. The man after God's own heart, David, also experienced this disaster. He walked in idleness upon the roof of his house. If he had been in communion with the Lord the great tragedy of his life would never have happened. We have pointed out in tracing prayer in the life of his son Solomon, that little is said about prayer, apart from the dedicatory prayer which he offered to God. Pride must have lifted him up when he became old and enjoyed the immense riches and the great glory with which he was surrounded. He would have never gone into gross licentiousness, and worshipped the idols of his many wives and concubines if he had prayed. If Judas had striven in prayer against his pet sin, he would never have betrayed the Lord for the thirty pieces of silver. We also saw that the second missionary journey of Paul, when it was suggested, lacked prayer, and prayerlessness led to the estrangement of Paul and Barnabas.

In thousands of Christian lives the disaster of prayerlessness has happened. There is no Christian who does not deplore the many mistakes made, the many offences given, the many backslidings and sins, and who

is not ready to confess the source of all has been the lack of prayer. How much sorrow, heartache, trial and burden can be avoided by more prayer, by asking counsel of the Lord.

16. Secret Prayer. It is commanded by our Lord, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (*Matt. vi:6*). And what He preached He also practiced. Nights and days were spent by Him in desert places, on mountain tops and the hillside of Olivet to hold communion with the Father. We do not know what He prayed. These prayers are hidden from our gaze. And so we are to follow His blessed example.

Many of the great men of God had their prayer training in secret. Moses had to leave Egypt, turn his back upon the land of culture, wisdom, art and glory and to spend forty years in the seclusion of Midian. Elijah the Tishbite appeared suddenly from unknown quarters, speaking with the authority of faith. It must have been preceded by years of solitude, alone with God, in fellowship with God. Many of the Psalms of David show that he too was often alone with God. No doubt all the prophets sought the face of the Lord in secret and communed with Him, for they were "holy men of God." Such communion in secret was the source of their strength and there, in secret communion with God, they received their messages. Once more we mention the man greatly beloved, Daniel. Three times a day he sought His presence.

John the Baptist was in the desert. The Lord's example we have mentioned above, and when He called His disciples apart "to rest a while," it was probably just for such communion. Paul too had to go to Arabia to be alone with the Lord.

Secret prayer is still the great need of the children of God. Backsliding begins with the neglect of this duty. To be much alone with God and commune with Him is the strength of the Christian's life. The commercial and social affairs of life in our own days would rob us of the quiet hour. The hurry and worry of life to-day is all against the continued practice of secret prayer.

17. United Prayer. United prayer is another great privilege. All the great leaders like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra and Nehemiah called the people together to call upon the name of the Lord. When Jehoshaphat prayed his great prayer, we read, "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children" (*2 Chron. xx:13*). It was a great united prayer meeting. And the Lord heard the cry of the multitude. When Daniel and his three companions faced death, because the king had ordered the slaying of the wise men of Babylon, among whom Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were reckoned, because they could not recall the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar, they held a prayer meeting in Babylon. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of

the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (*Dan. ii:17-19*). When Peter was in prison with the sentence of death resting upon him, a united prayer meeting was held in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark (*Acts xii:12*). The first great missionary movement of the Church was born in united prayer (*Acts xiii:1*).

Our Lord left a definite command for such prayer. "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (*Matt. xviii:19*). Christian believers in time of need do well to tell others of their burdens and ask prayer fellowship. It is in obedience to the Word of the Lord, and the united plea of the children of God is heard and answered. Great things have been accomplished through united prayer.

18. Public Prayers. These were often made among the people Israel, especially at the critical periods when danger threatened. We do not need to cite again such prayers during the administration of Samuel; or the prayer of Jehoshaphat and the prayers of Ezra (*Chapter ix*), and the prayer of Nehemiah (*Neh. ix*). The prayer of Solomon in connection with the dedication of the Temple was a public prayer and a model of such a prayer.

19. Family Prayers. Of Abraham the Lord said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath

spoken of him" (*Gen. xviii:19*). No doubt when he built his altars and worshipped, calling upon the name of the Lord, he called his household together. Households are mentioned in the New Testaments. Timothy came from a godly household. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (*2 Tim. i:5*. Reading of the Word of God and prayer must have been practiced in that household. Paul writes in *Eph. vi:4*, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." How can this be done without family prayer? Philemon had the church in his house (*Philemon, Verse 2*). It must have consisted of his family and all who belonged to his household. In the Christian home, the husband represents Christ; he is to love his wife, even as Christ loved the Church. The wife represents the Church; she is to be obedient to her own husband. Thus the mystery of Christ and the Church is to be beautifully exemplified in the Christian family. But all this necessitates family worship and prayer. Only in this way can the children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, when they see the loving service of the husband and the obedient submission of the wife, when they listen to the reading of the Word of God and to daily prayer.

One of the evil characteristics of the professing mass of Christendom in the last days, who have the form of godliness and deny the power of it, is "disobedient to parents" (*2 Tim. iii:1-5*). In many cases the dis-

obedience of children in Christian homes is traceable to the sad neglect of family prayer.

20. Ejaculatory Prayers. We sometimes speak of them as sentence prayers. Nehemiah illustrates such prayers. He was serving the wine at the king's table; the king noticed the sadness of his countenance and inquired about the burden which weighed upon his heart. Then Nehemiah relating his experience writes: "Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven" (*Neh. i:4*). He at once uttered a prayer in his heart. Similar ejaculatory prayers are found in his book. Jeremiah also used this form of prayer. Peter used it when, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord save me" (*Matt. xiv:30*). It is used by all believers, and a blessed habit which may be acquired and practiced throughout the day. Walking along the street, occupied in business, in the workshop, in the kitchen, on land and on sea, at all times during the day and during wakeful nights, the heart can be in communion with Him and breathe a word of request, or utter a word of praise. This does not need to be audible. It is rather the breathing of the new nature.

21. Prayer in Despondency. Such has been prayed by a number of godly men. Moses prayed to the Lord and said: "Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou

swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness" (*Num. xi:11-15*). But the Lord did not answer this prayer of despondency. Instead of slaying His servant He made a gracious provision to relieve his burden.

Elijah "went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (*1 Kings xix:4*). But the Lord did not answer his prayer. He sent an angel instead who provided for his physical wants.

Displeased Jonah, and angry with the Lord, prayed, "I pray Thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and Thou repentest Thee of evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live" (*Jonah iv:2-4*). Nor was his prayer answered, but the Lord showed him his failure.

No doubt similar prayers have been prayed in despondency, in severe illness, in deep sorrow and loss, and other distressing circumstances by many, that the Lord might end their lives. But the Lord in His

mercy and kindness did not grant the request, but sent relief instead, as He did with Moses and Elijah.

22. Prayer and the Laws of Nature. Here is where we meet the objections of Destructive Criticism, Modernism and Infidelity in general. That there are great laws by which the entire universe is governed and regulated no one can deny. But only a few of these laws are known to man. Many are unknown, and science will probably never explore them and bring them within the range of human knowledge. The extreme evolutionist tells us that these laws formed themselves. It took millions of years, no one knows how many millions, for the formation of these laws of nature. Everything started with some mysterious matter, which came from nowhere. Perhaps the first law was the spiral movement by which this mysterious matter moved about in the immense space. Gradually things developed. Other laws formed themselves and became established in the government of the universe. It is needless to waste our space and the time of our readers by repeating the foolish inventions of the darkened mind of men. The wonderful laws of nature demand a super-intelligent, all-wise higher Being, who formed these laws and governs His creation by them. There is a wonderful design in all nature. It is impossible to conceive that it originated by itself.

Many scientists and theologians, who are not atheistic, acknowledge this fact. But on the other hand, they deny that God having made these laws, does interfere with them. He lets them work and work out the plans without any change whatever. They can never be arrested in their different spheres. Such

a belief denies the miracles recorded in the Word of God, for a miracle is a supernatural action by which certain laws are suspended. Modernism denies the miracles of the Bible on this ground.

But what kind of a God and Creator is He who made laws, upholds laws, governs by them, and then is unable to suspend the workings of these laws in order to accomplish His purposes? If this were the case, God would be the helpless victim of His own laws. He would not be the Almighty.

The Holy Scriptures show conclusively that God in His Almighty power if it pleases Him, in answer to prayer, suspends His own laws, and then the result is what we call a miracle. He displays His almighty power in answer to the cry of the creature of the dust. This is a wonderful fact.

We shall now call to the reader's remembrance some of the outstanding miracles in which God arrested the working of nature's laws, by which He upholds and governs His creation.

We quote first of all the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea (*Ex. xiv*). As we have seen, this was accomplished in answer to the prayer of Moses. Some well-meaning men have tried to explain this great event in a natural way. We heard of a professor who said that Moses knew probably about the tide of the sea, and selected a convenient spot which made the passage possible when the waters had receded, and that the Egyptian hosts made a mistake in their haste, by selecting deep waters in which they perished. But the historical account does not permit such a natural explanation. We read, "And Moses

stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, *and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left*" (*Ex. xiv:21-22*). That is, there was a wall of water above and there was a wall of water below. The flow of the waters from above was arrested and the flow of the waters below also ceased. A hollow, or as we might call it, a grave, was formed, and the Israelitish hosts passed through this grave. Typically it foreshadows the death of Christ through which the people of God are delivered from their enemies, by the power of God. Now this was a miracle. It demonstrated the almighty power of God. There can be no explanation of this event. God set aside his laws in answer to prayer. It was the same in the passage through Jordan. Jordan overflowed its banks. "The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan, and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho" (*Josh. iii:16*). It was another miracle and typifies again the death of Christ, by which the people of God are brought into a heavenly land and inheritance.

We could go back in Israel's history between the passage through the Red Sea, and the passage through the River Jordan, and find that God in His wisdom and power did miracles. We take but one. The Israelites had been bitten by poisonous serpents. The poison

did its fatal work in the bodies of the men, women, and children. According to laws of nature they were doomed to certain death. There was no escape. Then in answer to prayer God provided a remedy. A brazen serpent hung on a pole. The believing look to that serpent on the pole arrested the death working poison, and every one that looked lived. And may we here add that the salvation of the sinner is an equally great miracle. Here is one of the laws of God, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." But God has provided a remedy, His blessed Son. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*John iii:15*).

We return to the book of Joshua. In *Chapter x:12-14* we read: "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel." Does the reader expect an explanation of this much-discussed passage? We cannot give it. Many explanations have been ventured, but they do not explain. Infidels have sneered at this great miracle. They have pointed out the fact that astronomy has discovered that the sun does not move at all, but that the earth moves. When

Joshua therefore demanded the sun to stand still he demanded something foolish; he should have said "earth stand still." Joshua knew nothing of how the heavens go. He used the then common expression. The sun appears in the morning and it is day; it disappears in the evening and night comes. We, with knowledge gained through scientific research, know that the sun has a fixed place and the planets of this solar system move in great circles around the sun. Yet we still speak as the people spoke 4,000 and more years ago, "the sun rises; the sun sets." We do not say, "the earth has risen and it is morning; the earth has finished its journey of twelve hours and night is coming." Joshua spoke according to his human knowledge. The Lord knew what he meant, and in answer to prayer He suspended the great laws by which the heavens move. There was a long day. We say it again, we cannot give an explanation; but we believe it because God is almighty. Such an event has not happened again in history.

We mention another example of how prayer suspended Nature's laws. Samuel had gathered the people in a solemn assembly. It was at the time of the wheat harvest. Thunder and rain, according to certain laws, never occur at that time of the year. But when Samuel prayed, the thunder and rain came (*1 Sam. xii:16-19*).

This brings Elijah to our attention. He prayed that it should not rain for three years and six months; he prayed again, and in answer to prayer the heavens were opened, and it rained. God, in answer to prayer, closed the heavens. The laws which govern the for-

mation of moisture in the air, and the precipitation of those moistures, were suspended. And when he prayed three and a half years later, these laws began to operate again. It was another evidence that God in answer to prayer arrests the workings of certain laws.

Many other prayer answers have the miraculous element in them. We cannot quote them all. In *2 Kings vi:6-7* we read how the law of gravitation was suspended. An axe-head of iron had fallen into the water and gone to the bottom. Elisha, no doubt with prayer, caused the iron to swim. Next to the great miracle in answer to Joshua's prayer, is the one recorded in *Isaiah xxxviii:5-8*.

"Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the Assyrian; and I will defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that He hath spoken; Behold I will bring again the shadows of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees as it was gone down" (*Isaiah xxxviii:5-8*). Explain it? It cannot be explained, for it was a miracle. God demonstrated again that He is master of His own laws, and can do with them as it pleases Him.

We quote one other instance: After the three companions of Daniel made their noble confession of trust in God, they were cast into the fiery furnace. The law of fire is to burn up and to destroy utterly. It was shown in this case. For we read: "Then was

Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego and to cast them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were bound, in their coats, in their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" (*Dan. iii:19-22*). The king had to witness the operation of the law of fire on his own mighty men who carried out his command.

But what happened to the three men cast into the tremendous heat of the furnace?

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake and said to his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walk-in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning, fiery furnace, and spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither. Then Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains,

and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." The fire could not hurt them, yet at the same time, the law of fire had done its perfect work with the cords and bands with which they had been bound. As soon as they had been cast into the fire, the bands and cords were consumed. But as to their persons, not a hair was singed, no smell of the fire could be detected. Let infidels laugh and Modernists mock, we believe every word as it is written here. The Almighty God had arrested the law of fire. He Himself in the person of His Son, by whom and for whom all things were created, was present with the three men in the fire.

These instances, and many others, show what God is able to do in answer to faith and prayer. He has the power to suspend the operation of His own laws. Yet no child of God would believe that He acts thus at all times. There can be no question that He often, in a smaller way, delivers His people in a miraculous manner, in answer to their cry. We know that countless thousands, as trusting as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were cast into the fire by cruel Rome. There was no divine interposition. The fire did its awful work. Yet He was with them in the fire.

23. Prayers of the Future. There are prayers recorded in the Word of God which are still unprayed. This leads us into the realm of prophecy. The present age, according to prophecy, ends with a restoration of the Jewish people to their own land. Such a restora-

tion is now in progress. But there is yet in store for them the greatest trouble of their age-long suffering. "And at that time * * * there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to the same time" (*Dan. xii:1*). Our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking as the greatest of all prophets, said in His Olivet discourse concerning the end of the present age, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (*Matt. xxiv:21*). Other prophecies speak of the same time of trouble, which, of course, is still future, for immediately after the tribulation of those days the Lord will appear in His glory (*Matt. xxiv:29*).

While the great mass of Jews who have returned to their land are unbelievers without faith and without hope, there will be among them a remnant of believers, who wait for the Hope of Israel, the coming of the King. This remnant will be called after the body of Christ is completed on earth and has been caught up to be with the Lord.

Now this godly remnant will be a praying remnant. Their prayers are prophetically pre-written in the Psalms. Here we read their cry to God during the time of their great trouble, when their enemies who hate them, surround them on all sides, when the wicked man, the false Christ, the Beast (*Rev. xiii:11-18; 2 Thess. ii*) is in the land and persecutes these Jewish saints. Our "Annotated Bible" on the Psalms shows in a brief way these prophetic prayers of the future and the relation of Psalm to Psalm. We give but a few illustrations here.

For instance, *Psalms iii–vii* contain the future prayers

of that remnant. The same is the case with *Psalms xlii–xliv.* In *Psalm xxxvii* their faith and trust in the Lord is expressed, as well as their hope that the Lord will act in their behalf. "For evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth (in the coming kingdom). For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (*Psalm xxxvii:* 9-11). *Psalm lv* contains one of the many imprecatory prayers prayed at that time of great trouble and persecution. Here we hear the remnant pray for God's vengeance and wrath. "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into sheol, for wickedness is in their dwellings, among them" (*Verse 15*). Here is another imprecatory prayer. "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth, break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters which run continually; when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be cut in pieces. As a snail melteth, let every one of them pass away, like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun" (*Psalm lviii:6-8*). But the preceding psalm is one which gives expression to their faith and hope in the Lord. "I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up."

Psalm lxxx is a great prayer of this remnant, addressed to the Shepherd of Israel. In this remarkable prayer there is a most interesting petition. They

pray to God, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man at Thy right hand, upon the Son of man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." The man at the right hand is the Lord Jesus Christ, and they pray thus for intervention and deliverance through Him, the once rejected King. The Psalm which precedes this prayer for divine help, *Psalm lxxix* shows the scenes of the great tribulation.

Besides these future prayers of faith and hope, the cries for deliverance and the imprecatory prayers, we find the many prayers giving thanks for the deliverance of the remnant by the Lord.

There are two interesting future prayers in the prophet Isaiah. One is a prayer for help; the other is a hymn of praise. The first is found in *Isaiah lxiii:17–lxiv:12*. The other is in *Chapter xii*.

We suggest to our readers to explore the Psalms and the prophetic books on these lines of the future prayers and the future answers in connection with Israel's restoration and deliverance.

24. The Last Prayer of the Bible and Its Future Answer. "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus" (*Rev. xxii:20*). This is the great and final prayer given to the true Church. It is the prayer of longing for His coming to fulfill to His own the promise to take them to the place where He is, the Father's house (*John xiv:1-3*). He Himself prays for this at the right hand of God. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (*John xviii:24*). It is still unanswered. But it will be an-

swered and must be answered. Failure is impossible. If it were to fail and remain unanswered, the Church would have been deceived and we might just as well close our Bibles.

And how will it be answered?

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 *Thess. iv:*16-18). When this answer comes, God once more will suspend certain of His laws and will deomonstrate His own almighty power. The bodies of myriads of saints have passed away. They sleep in the dust of the earth. God will bring their bodies out of their graves. The Son of God said, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice." There will be a resurrection of life.

The living saints in that day will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Then, together with the risen ones, we will be caught up in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. The law of gravitation will be swept aside by the omnipotent power of the Lord.

Science tells us that light travels 186,000 miles a second. The universe is such an immense space that it is immeasurable. The light from distant constellations takes thousands of years to reach our earth. Yet beyond the most distant cluster of stars is another

heaven, the third heaven, with the throne of God, the Father's house. In that day all laws of space and distances will be set aside, and the redeemed hosts will be carried through the heavens to be ushered into His presence.

The Church waits for this great prayer answer. It will come suddenly.

25. The Unprayed Prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a prayer is written in the *second Psalm.*

"Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." These words are addressed by God to His Son, our Lord. It is an unprayed prayer up to the present time. The nations are not His inheritance nor does He possess the ends of the earth.

The rebellion against God and against His Christ, His anointed, as described in the opening verses of this Psalm, is now in progress. It started with the beginning of the present age (*Acts iv:25-28*). It culminates in the great apostasy, which has begun, and which will end with the complete rejection of revealed truth, and the rejection of Him who is the Truth.

When finally the true Church is caught up, God will tell His Son to make this request. He will ask the Father for His blood bought inheritance, for His crown-rights. And the Father will answer His prayer. He will return in great power and glory and be enthroned as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

26. Prayer in the Millennium. *Psalm lxxii* is the great kingdom Psalm in which David beheld in

vision the glories of the Kingdom of Him who, according to the flesh, is of His seed.

"He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; *prayer* also shall be made for Him continually; daily shall He be praised" (*Psalm lxxii:8-15*).

Prayer and praise will then be heard in the earth as never before. Whole nations will acknowledge Him as King and worship Him in the beauty of holiness. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Praise and adoration will be heard from one end of the earth to the other. Every need, physical and otherwise, will be supplied. "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (*Isaiah lxv:23-24*).

"And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear,

saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens and they shall hear the earth" (*Hosea ii:21*).

During that coming age of consummation and glory there will be on earth a great house of worship. It is the house of the Lord, exalted upon a mountain. All nations shall flow unto it (*Isaiah ii:2*). Ezekiel saw this house in his final vision. That house will be a house of prayer for all nations.

* * * * * *

Our little volume is finished. It is imperfect in many ways. May it please the Lord to use what we have tried to glean from His most holy Word, to encourage His people in a life of prayer, faith and trust in Him.

"Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us" (*Psalm lxii:8*).

"O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (*Psalm lxxxiv:12*). "Commit Thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (*Psalm xxxvii:5*).

DR. ARNO C. GAEBELEIN was known as the Dean of prophetic students and teachers and up until his death in 1945 had headed the famed work of OUR HOPE, the outstanding Bible study magazine. As its founder and editor for fifty-two years he guided that unswerving testimony which constantly defended the faith and emphasized the premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to his magazine editorial work, he authored many outstanding books—expositional, devotional and prophetic.

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